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# THE NOVELS OF GEORGE JOHN WHYTE-MELVILLE

by

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# CHAPTER I

## The Purpose of This Study.

The purpose of this dissertation is three-fold; to provide (1) a full descriptive account of the novels of George John Whyte-Melville; (2) a critical estimate of his work; and (3) a definition of that phase of Victorian society which the novels represented not only to Whyte-Melville's contemporaries but to a later generation as well. The results would be more satisfying than they are if the investigation altered radically the critical estimate of the novels already made by historians of Victorian literature, or if, taking them as social history, it discovered in them a significance far greater than that already observed by other writers. But although existing accounts of his novels are slight and inadequate, their conclusions are in the main sound, and such a radical revision of critical opinion is not warranted. Further investigation is warranted, just the same, for conclusions already drawn by other writers need to be corrected, supplemented, and documented; and since there is no full account at all now existing, the descriptive detail should be of practical use to scholars investigating aspects of the Victorian novel to which Whyte-Melville's works may be related.

For the literary historian it is the picture in Whyte-Melville's novels of a special phase of Victorian

society which is their most interesting aspect and their chief claim to attention. During the novelist's lifetime his books found "an instant place" upon every drawing room table of the fashionable West End.[1] It was the fiction of Whyte-Melville--not of Surtees--which provided that section of the general public interested in sport their ideal.[2] "Most erudite of sportsmen,"[3] the novelist was respected as a faithful recorder of the minutiae of fox-hunting techniques as well as of the spirit of the chase. One historian of the hunt after criticizing Whyte-Melville's account in Riding Recollections of a particular pack of hounds adds quickly, "however, most people would quite as soon be wrong with Whyte-Melville as be right with any other writer on sporting subjects."[4] Another, drawing a sketch of a "certain aspect of leisured life" of the mid-Victorian period says that the original picture of this life is to be found in Whyte-Melville's novels.[5] This fidelity with which the novelist portrayed society as his own set liked to see it is indicated by the fact that the next generation referred to him constantly in order to explain itself, looked back upon him with nostalgia, and viewed with uneasiness the decline of interest in his books, which "signalized the end of an epoch."[6] Still another historian of hunting, for example, suggesting a "fox-hunter's bookshelf," writes that "a military correspondent recently wrote saying that the young officers in his mess had never heard of Whyte-Melville. To

those of us who were nurtured on the works of this delightful writer such ignorance comes as something of a shock."[7] Even such writers as Siegfried Sassoon and John Galsworthy, seeking a symbol, refer to the "Whyte-Melville manner" when describing characters in their books.[8] It is, in fact, quite probable that Whyte-Melville not only recorded this aspect of Victorian society but helped to shape it, or at least to shape its sporting manners. For he was of considerable influence upon a generation of youths going to Oxford.[9] Young Jolyon Forsyte consciously imitates the sportsman-dandy of the Whyte-Melville novel,[10] and the author of the Forsyte Saga himself when he was at Oxford placed Whyte-Melville with Dickens and Thackeray as his favorite novelists.[11] At least one historian of the hunt attributes the post-Regency change in sporting manners partly to the influence of Whyte-Melville.[12]

Footnotes CHAPTER I

1. Sir J. George Fortescue, "Whyte-Melville," in Royal Society of Literature, The Eighteen Sixties, ed. by John Drinkwater, 1932, p. 232.

2. Frederic Watson, Robert Smith Surtees: A Critical Study, 1933, p. 242.

3. Edith Humphris and Douglas Sladen, Adam Lindsay Gordon and his Friends in England and Australia, 1912, p. 203.

4. Thomas Lister, 4th Baron Ribbesdale, The Queen's Hounds and Stag-Hunting Recollections, 1897, p. 127.

5. Richard Greville Verney, Lord Willoughby de Broke, The Sport of Our Ancestors, Being a Collection of Prose and Verse Setting Forth the Sport of Fox-Hunting as They Knew It, ed. and sel. with Introduction and Appreciations by Lord Willoughby de Broke, 1921, pp. 2-4.

6. "Whyte-Melville and Others," [London] Times Literary Supplement, 16 June 1921, p. 377.

7. Sir Charles Frederick, "A Fox-Hunter's Bookshelf," Chap. xxxii of Fox-Hunting, ed. by Sir Charles E. Frederick, 1930 (The Lonsdale Library, Vol. VII), pp. 311-312.

8. Siegfried Sassoon, Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man [1929] in The Memoirs of George Sherston, 1937, pp. 166-167. John Galsworthy, Flowering Wilderness, Chap. ii. See also H. V. Marrot, The Life and Letters of John Galsworthy, 1936, pp. 59-63, and other allusions to Whyte-Melville in Galsworthy's novels mentioned below, Chap. viii, Sec. 3

9. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed. 1910-11, under "Whyte-Melville." (The entry concerning Whyte-Melville is deleted from the 14th edition.)

10. See the story "A Sad Affair" from On Forsyte 'Change, discussed below, Chap. viii, sec. 3

11. Marrot, p. 64.

12. Viola, Lady Apsley, Bridleways Through History, 1936, p. 376.

# CHAPTER II

## Writings about Whyte-Melville

Writings about Whyte-Melville consist of scattered articles in periodicals and chapters or sections of books; there is no full-length treatment.[1] These writings fall into two groups, writings by historians of the Victorian novel and those by historians of the special aspect of Victorian society reflected in Whyte-Melville's works. Within each group there is a further division between earlier writers moved to praise by an uncritical nostalgia and those with a keener critical perception who view Whyte-Melville from a later vantage-point in time and find him significant without exaggerating his accomplishment as novelist.

Sir Herbert Maxwell, who wrote the sketch of Whyte-Melville in the Dictionary of National Biography[2] and edited the collected works,[3] may be excused for critical fuzziness, for his interest was clearly personal and not literary.[4] But "Lewis Melville"[5] [Lewis S. Benjamin] and Stewart M. Ellis,[6] both of whom published collected studies of various minor Victorian novelists, echo Sir Herbert's words. Lewis Melville's conclusion to an article in the Fortnightly Review on the centenary of Whyte-Melville's birth, for example, quotes Maxwell:

> But as long as chivalry in man and tenderness in maid have any hold upon English readers--as long as people take delight in descriptions of honest love-making, adventure and field sports, or find amusement in gentle satire of well-to-do folk, and kindly raillery at the foibles of all classes--as long as the public is not too critical to enjoy pictures of the general prevalence of good over evil in the world as we have it--so long shall Whyte-Melville find high favor with wholesome minds.[7]

Having preceded this quotation by an admission that Whyte-Melville's novels may not rank high as "human documents," and may be deficient in the variety of characters represented and in the significance of the problems presented for solution (compared with "those with which certain more recent writers entertain their readers"),[8] Melville goes on to say, damning with very faint praise indeed, "Some may find this estimate too high [sic!]; but it is not to be denied that Whyte-Melville wrote very readable books," adding "that with Market Harborough he secured for himself a niche in the gallery of Victorian novelists."[9] Although these articles supply a few facts of interest they are of little critical significance, serving more to indicate what Whyte-Melville might mean to an older generation than to explain his importance.

Three later critics, Ernest A. Baker,[10] Michael Sadleir,[11] and Malcolm Elwin,[12] all historians of the Victorian novel, provide a sounder critical estimate and among them draw most of the important critical conclusions, including indications of important literary relationships.

The estimate by Baker is the most perfunctory, that by Sadleir the harshest,[13] but the most penetrating, that by Elwin the most complete in its tracing of literary connections.

A second group of writers, Sir Charles Frederick,[14] Sir John Fortescue,[15] the anonymous writer of a (London) Times Literary Supplement article,[16] F. S. Darton,[17] Frederick Watson,[18] Lord Willoughby de Broke,[19] and Allan Pryce-Jones[20] describe the society which Whyte-Melville records and indicate his relationship to it. The undiscriminating enthusiasm of Sir Charles Frederick makes his comment, like that of Maxwell, Melville, and Ellis, of little critical value. The other writers combine more critical sense with their explanation of Whyte-Melville's importance although they show a cleavage of opinion. Darton and Watson, who are concerned with the traditions of English country life, particularly with the novels of Surtees, consider Whyte-Melville too much concerned with the fashionable London set to represent the society which they describe. Fortescue and Pryce-Jones, dealing with the same topic, consider Whyte-Melville representative, but attribute to him a scope which is wider than the facts support. Lord Willoughby de Broke, though sharing Darton's and Watson's critical preference for Surtees, does not dismiss Whyte-Melville and relies upon him for a picture which supplements that given in the novels of Surtees. These three studies (by Darton, de Broke, and

Watson) substantiate their generalizations with considerable detail; all three writers were or are prominent sportsmen and fox-hunters.[21] The essay by Pryce-Jones is of particular importance, for it shows the interest which a novel by Whyte-Melville may have for the casual reader, familiar with the Victorian scene, who happens upon, for example, _Market Harborough._

Footnotes CHAPTER II

1. In addition to the studies mentioned in this section, there are passing references to Whyte-Melville in general histories of literature and of the novel and in most books about fox-hunting. Of the passing references in the brief histories, the remarks of George Saintsbury in The English Novel (n.d., Channels of Literature Series) and A History of Nineteenth Century Literature 1780-1895 (1899), are the most interesting. Among the more recent brief histories of the novel that by Edward Wagenknecht (Cavalcade of the English Novel, 1943) provides the most adequate account (page 575) though it includes minor inaccuracies (giving his name as George James Whyte-Melville following E. A. Baker's History of the English Novel, and ascribing to the Forsytes a devotion to Whyte-Melville which belongs to another type of character in Galsworthy's novels with the exception of Young Jolyon who is himself untypical of the Forsytes [see discussion of Galsworthy below, Chap. viii, sec. 3 ]).

2. LXI (1900), 173-174.

3. London: W. Thacker & Co., 1898-1902, with introductions by Maxwell to volumes I (Riding Recollections), ix-xviii, and II (Katerfelto), xi-xviii, both volumes 1898. Apparently a plan to provide introductions to each volume was abandoned after the first two.

4. He knew Whyte-Melville personally (DNB LXI, 174, under "Sources").

5. "Centenary of G. J. Whyte-Melville," Fortnightly Review CXV [CIX New Series]" (1921), 997-1003, and in his Victorian Novelists, 1906, 188-203.

6. "Whyte-Melville," The Bookman, LX (1921), 124-126, reprinted in Mainly Victorians, 1925, 103-107.

7. Fortnightly Review, CXV, 1003. This is not a fully accurate description of Whyte-Melville. See account of Bones and I, for example, below, Chap. v, sec. 16 .

8. Same place.

9. Same place. As another example, a more recent article in the older style, that by Fortescue, uses such admiring phrases as "simple, easy, and correct style," "possessed a very considerable literary gift," "knew how to tell a story and draw character," "remarkable felicity of phrase," and "shrewd wit and bubbling humor" (p. 230). One of

Whyte-Melville's contemporaries as early as 1858, wrote in a manner not far different from that of Maxwell: "It must be advanced also, that in his choice of subjects, and his way of handling them, Mr. Melville does not display much originality; but then it can not be denied that in his writings he is always a lively, accomplished, entertaining, and more gentlemanly companion" (J. Cordy Jeaffreson, Novels and Novelists from Elizabeth to Victoria, 1858, II, 376). At this time Digby Grand, Tilbury Nogo, General Bounce, and Kate Coventry had been published, and The Interpreter, published January, 1858, had appeared in Fraser's. The same writer speaks of the "strength and ease" of Whyte-Melville's style.

10. History of the English Novel, Volume VII (1936), 117-118 and 233-234.

11. "G. J. Whyte-Melville" in his Excursions in Victorian Bibliography, 1922, pp. 183-188, including a brief account of Whyte-Melville and a bibliography of his books which is more complete and detailed than that in the Cambridge Bibliography of Literature, ed. F. N. W. Bateson, 1941, III, 511.

12. Victorian Wallflowers, 1924, pp. 285-288 and throughout. The author also reviewed the Tavistock Library edition of Market Harborough, Riding Recollections, Kate Coventry, and Katerfelto (1933) in the /London/ Observer, 23 July, 1933, an article which was not available to the writer of this dissertation.

13. For example: The mentality from which these books spring is "so stupid, so impenetrable to variety of idea"; Whyte-Melville "in the role of novelist is absurd"; he is a "Ouida in breeches"; it is through "the screen of their /of the novels'/ fatuity" that one has glimpses of the author himself (pp. 84-85). Referring to Whyte-Melville's style, Sadleir speaks of his "stilted rhetoric and clumsy naivete" and calls him "the well-spring of the cliche" (same place).

14. Work cited.

15. Work cited.

16. Work cited.

17. From Surtees to Sassoon; Some English Contrasts (1838-1928), 1931.

18. Work cited.

19. Work cited.

Footnotes Chapter II (Continued)

20. In his column "Books in General" in The New Statesman and Nation, XXXI (1946), 341.

21. There is a literature of the hunt which apparently approaches a "canon". See particularly de Broke's Sport of Our Ancestors already cited. Also E. D. Cuming, A Fox-Hunting Anthology, 1928; Samuel J. Looker, The Chase; an Anthology of Hunting, 1922; and Eric Parker, The Lonsdale Anthology of Sporting Prose and Verse, n.d. (The Lonsdale Library, Vol. XII). To these may be added Frederick's "A Fox-Hunter's Book Shelf" already cited. The books cited by Darton and Watson contain interesting evaluations of hunting scenes in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century novelists, and Watson discusses such writers as C. J. Apperly ("Nimrod") and Henry Hall Dixon ("The Druid") as well. For other references to "hunting literature" and to "hunting in literature" the bibliographies at the end of Bridleways Through History, 1936, by Viola, Lady Apsley, and of Patrick Chalmers. History of Hunting, n. d. (The Lonsdale Library, Vol. XXIII) may be consulted; the texts of these two volumes mention passages and books not listed in the terminal bibliographies.

# CHAPTER III

## Biographical Sketch of George John Whyte-Melville

Biographical materials about George John Whyte-Melville are scarce and inadequate. As Frederick Locker-Lampson explains,[1] Whyte-Melville deliberately cultivated the sporting, especially the fox-hunting, set and eschewed, almost completely, literary acquaintances.[2] Scattered references to him appear in memoirs of the sportsmen of his time, but such writers are disinclined to elaborate personal reminiscence and completely unconcerned with literary problems.[3] Most of the known facts about his life are included in four sketches,[4] one by his sole literary acquaintance, Locker-Lampson,[5] the others by military and sporting acquaintances, Sir Herbert Maxwell,[6] H. O. Nethercote, and Col. John Anstruther-Thompson.[8]

Born July 19, 1821,[9] George John Whyte-Melville[10] was the son of John Whyte-Melville, of Mount Melville, Strathkinnes in Fifeshire near St. Andrews, Scotland, and of Catherine Anne Sarah, youngest daughter of Francis Godolphin Osbourne, Fifth Duke of Leeds. His grandfather, John Whyte, son of Robert Whytt, had become the heir of the entailed Strathkinnes estates upon the death of Gen. Melville.[11] (Robert Whytt /1714-1766/ had been distinguished as the president of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, and

## CHAPTER III

## [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

professor of the theory of medicine at the University of Edinburgh.)[12] The novelist, then, came of good family, son of a Scottish laird and, on his mother's side, grandson of a duke.[13] Hunting as well as the army was a tradition in the family, for the novelist's father was joint master of the Fife hounds for a number of years (until 1848)[14] and even in old age, a persistent golfer. He outlived his son (so the novelist himself never became one of the landed gentry), apparently jovial as well as hearty.[15]

The novelist was educated at Eton under Keate and Hawtrey, and upon leaving that school entered the army at the age of eighteen, receiving his commission in the 93rd Highlanders in 1839. Seven years later, in 1846, he exchanged into the Coldstream Guards, as captain, one year before his marriage August 7, 1847, to Charlotte, daughter of William Hanbury, 1st Lord Bateman, by whom he had one daughter. His life between public school and marriage was one of devotion to regimental duties and to the attractions of London life,[16] in this much like the life of several young dandies in his novels[17] (like Digby Grand he had a tour of duty in Canada);[18] including indiscreet evenings at the gambling tables of the famous Crockford's.[19]

Two years after his marriage he retired from the Guards with the rank of Captain, and settled in Northamptonshire,[20] his adopted country for some years, after, as well as before, the Crimean War during which he was never

seriously engaged.[21] There he began the pattern which was to be his life, hunting during the day, writing during the evening.[22] His first published work appeared one year after his retirement from the Army--a translation of Horace in 1850.[23] Three years after this his first novel, Digby Grand, appeared. In 1855[24] at the outbreak of the Crimean War he joined the Turkish irregular cavalry with the rank of major, retiring after the war to Northamptonshire once more, at Boughton,[25] and to his writing and to his hunting in Northamptonshire and in neighboring Leicestershire,[26] both fashionable hunting countries. His summers were often spent at golf in St. Andrews.[27]

Upon inheriting money, he moved from "the little white hunting-box" to Wootton Hall[28] about the year 1863[29] and "two or three seasons later," 1866,[30] moved to London in accordance with his wife's plans. This, presumably, was to give his daughter Florence the benefit of London life, for in 1871,[31] after the marriage of his daughter in 1870[32] to Clotworthy John Eyre Foster-Skeffington, 11th Viscount Masserene and Ferrard,[33] he moved to the country once again, this time settling in Gloucestershire in the neighborhood of Tetbury, where he lived until his death in 1878, (December 7).

During all this time his chief interest was fox-hunting. Secretary of the famous Pytchley Hunt for a number of years,[34] he was instrumental in getting Anstruther-Thompson there as master, and in the letter to Thompson proposing the

the change, he wrote "the longer I live the more I find cause to agree with Jorrocks, that 'all time is wasted that is not spent in hunting.'"[35] Even while living in London, he hunted three times a week.[36] After returning to the country he hunted chiefly with the Vale of White Horse hounds,[37] but ventured also to Exmoor and to Ireland in search of background for novels.[38] Passing references indicate that his companions were usually aristocrat-sportsmen.[38]

Whyte-Melville's own death on the hunting field seems to refute Lord Willoughby de Broke's charge that in his novels he exaggerated the dangers of the hunt. "He was galloping across a heavy ploughed field[40] and his horse fell with him as if shot. Whether he crossed his legs or stumbled where the field had been cross-ploughed, no one knows. Poor dear Melville fell with great force on his head and was killed on the spot."[41] This was while he was hunting with the V.W.H. hounds; on a favorite horse, the Shah;[42] the plowed field was near Charlton Pond, a mile or two from Malmesbury.[43] Two coincidences seem to belong in one of his novels rather than in a biographical sketch. About three months before his death a friend visiting his "little house" at Tetbury, asked "But isn't it rather too near the churchyard?" "Perhaps," Whyte-Melville answered, "for some tastes, but the closer the better for a hunting man: they will not have so far to carry him."[44] And his last verses, the melancholy "Good-bye", which was set to music by Tosti and made famous by Melba,[45]

were published on the day of his funeral.[46]

Although his family wanted him buried in the family vault at St. Andrews, his wife insisted on following his own request for burial in the churchyard at Tetbury,[47] where his friends[48] gathered for the funeral December 12, 1878 (the VWH meet being postponed for that day).[49] His mother, the Lady Catherine, was too ill to attend, outliving him only eighteen days,[50] and his father could not leave Strathkinnes.[51] After the funeral his friends collected a handsome memorial fund of two thousands pounds, erected a cross and tombstone over the grave at Tetbury, a memorial window in the Guards' Chapel in London, and a fountain at St. Andrews in addition to giving five hundred pounds to the Hunt Servants' Benefit Society.[52] Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm (sculptor of the Wellington statue at Hyde Park Corner), who had sat in church in the pew behind Melville, made a bust from memory, at the request of the widow, and a pen-and-ink sketch of Whyte-Melville on horseback.[53]

In person Whyte-Melville was apparently kindly,[54] modest, gifted with a sense of humor[55] and with a wit sometimes tart.[56] Nethercote describes him as of "striking appearance, slight of frame and of gentle mien," and attributes to him a cultivated mind and a brilliance of conversation[57]. Although according to one, he was careless to a fault in his dress,[58] he evidently inclined to gentlemanly sumptuousness, his adopted motto being, "Do the thing

handsomely or let it alone."[59] Good company,[60] he was "quick to see the ridiculous side of anything, and full of anecdote."[61] Not all the *bon mots* attributed to Whyte-Melville support the reputation for brilliance,[62] but repartee reported from past generations often does not. When his publisher hinted that he was saying the same thing over again in different words, he commented drily that he had reached the age at which he said the same thing over again in the same words.[63] Upon the preacher's declaring in the kirk one Sunday that the condition of the Romish Church was such that "she was suffering from the expulsive power of a new affection," Whyte-Melville was heard to murmur to his companion, "Capital phrase, that, Blackwood, for the divorce court!"[64] During a hunt upon being overtaken by a friend he hoped he had just pounded, he said with a beaming smile, "I thought I had you in that corner, old chap, but I see that I have no right to my *risus in angulo*."[65] At another time, about to part from Locker-Lampson at the door of a mutual acquaintance, he was asked "You like the Q---s?" "Yes, very much," he answered, "I like *him* better than she does, and I like *her* better than he does."[66] Once in the city when a lady's carriage drew up smartly in front of a shop before which Whyte-Melville was standing, and splashed him from head to foot with mire, and the lady, a friend of his, exclaimed that she was "*so* sorry," the "Major" kept his equanimity, answering only, "It doesn't matter a bit; I always say you

drive the best-actioned horses in London."[67]

While those who wrote of his horsemanship, praise it, his riding did not attract the attention which that of other men in the field did. In an obituary notice one London newspaper spoke of him as "one of the most finished riders of his day";[68] the historian of the Pytchley Hunt praised him as having "a fine temper, nice hands, and a sympathy between himself and his horse that rarely has been equalled";[69] his biographer speaks of him as a "bold and good horseman";[70] but to illustrate perfect horsemanship his biographer turns to other riders.[71] Nor were his mounts, apparently, unusual.[72] For some years after settling in Northamptonshire, despite his independence of income from his writing, he was unable to ride horses of any great value.[73] Not one to ride with the first flyers in a hunt, he was nevertheless "jealous with the jealousy of wholesome ambition" and "cared not to go where others had gone before, preferring a line of his own."[74] Yet Lord Ribbesdale comments that most horsemen would rather be wrong with Whyte-Melville than right with any other writer on the subject.[75] There is a similar discrepancy in the matter of costume, for although a keen critic and "acknowledged arbiter" of hunting equipment,[76] he was indifferent to his own riding costume,[77] wearing jack boots and a black coat.[78] But his refusal to wear the red coat in later years may have stemmed from a kind of fastidiousness, a thought that when the red coat had become so frequent, a self-conscious change

from the accustomed black might smack of the vulgar; at least an anecdote about the matter[79] suggests this interpretation: when a friend once told him he really ought to get a red coat, he replied, "So I will, old fellow, if you like. I daresay the crossing-sweeper in Berkeley Square will lend me one." It is quite probable that Whyte-Melville owed the respect given him as a sportsman not simply to personal excellence but to his superior articulateness, and especially, since there were many sporting writers, to his ability to invest hunting with a "halo of chivalry."[80] His biographer indicates this in his expression of an attitude shared by others of his set: Whyte-Melville himself was Baldassare's perfetto cortegiano[81] (in a Victorian setting), in the eyes of his fellows, and neither "Nimrod" nor Surtees had the secret of Whyte-Melville's "glamour, which invested the rapturous reality with an air of romance and gave to technical details the momentous import of the operations of war; neither of them kept before his readers, as Whyte-Melville did, the ideal of a cultivated, accomplished, lofty-minded, warm-hearted English gentleman."[82]

Whyte-Melville used to say that his two great objects in life were the pigskin[83] and the pen.[84] But he cared little for the form in which his books were printed,[85] and appeared, to Locker-Lampson, at least, to undervalue his literary faculty,[86] although at least once he was moved to assure one of his non-literary friends that writing a novel

was very hard work.[87] Locker-Lampson attributes his carelessness to the fact that he was never a really needy man.[88] Judging from what information is available, one might sooner come to a conclusion that his carelessness about writing was the result of a deliberate attitude of the gentleman-amateur who would not consider professionalism in keeping with his character. Certainly his devoting all the proceeds of his writing to philanthropic and charitable ends[89] seems to have been a principle with him; Nethercote uses different and more suggestive phrasing--he "made it a rule never to lay out upon his own personal gratification" the money he earned by his pen.[90] When one of his three-volume novels was worth 1500 pounds,[91] it might easily have been a temptation for a horseman whose major interest was hunting in the fashionable countries to provide himself with more and better mounts than Whyte-Melville apparently permitted himself, instead of giving so liberally. (It is in keeping with his singleness of occupation that his gifts were usually for the benefit of reading rooms and stable-boys.[92] The institute in Northampton later called by his name was established early in his life from a "fortune" inherited after his marriage.)[93]

As for his reasons for writing, Maxwell says simply that he wrote "for his own amusement and that of his friends,"[94] and there seems to be no possibility of speculation beyond that made by Malcolm Elwin that he began to write "because he possessed a love of literature, culture,

and romance above the average."[95] Presumably there is no need to explain (nor possibility of explaining) why a man begins to write. Whyte-Melville, once he began, had enough encouragement, certainly, to continue in his position as leading writer for a time in Fraser's Magazine[96] (as an admirer of Thackeray, this would, one supposes, appeal to him) and in his popularity among his fellows.[97]

Footnotes

## CHAPTER III

1. My Confidences; an Autobiographical Sketch Addressed to My Descendents, 2nd ed., 1896, pp. 379-385 ("Major G. J. Whyte-Melville and Others").

2. Whyte-Melville could easily have cultivated acquaintances among writers and artists: he knew Locker-Lampson, had dined at Anthony Froude's; his father and his friend John Anstruther-Thompson (so, presumably, Whyte-Melville himself) were acquaintances of the Grant family (including Sir Francis Grant, the painter and President of the Royal Academy, and a fellow Scot). Whyte-Melville did meet Agnes Strickland, shortly after the publication of Holmby House, for H. O. Nethercote records their meeting in his The Pytchley Hunt, Past and Present, 1888, pp. 268-269, and Whyte-Melville later dedicated his The Queen's Maries to her. Elwin mentions that Whyte-Melville called on "Ouida" in London at the Langham Hotel (Victorian Wallflowers, p. 300).

3. The writer of this dissertation has been able to find no detailed account of Whyte-Melville's life. Chalmers in his History of Hunting regrets the absence of a biography (p. 26), so indicating that none exists, and the testimony of men as widely read in Victorian literature as Elwin and Sadleir confirms the assumption that no source has been overlooked. Such a biography should be by a writer intimately acquainted with hunting, even more than with the novel.

4. A fifth sketch in George F. Underhill, A Century of English Fox-Hunting, 1900, pp. 179-184, is apparently based on Nethercote's earlier account which it follows in selection, arrangement, and phrasing, but with several careless inaccuracies, at one point attributing to Whyte-Melville himself a simile which Nethercote applies to Whyte-Melville, and at another point omitting a "not" so as to change the sense of a comment completely.

5. Work cited.

6. Work cited.

7. Work cited, particularly pp. 263-272, "Major Whyte-Melville."

8. Eighty Years' Reminiscences, 2 vols., 1904.

Footnotes Chapter III (Continued)

9. Most of the accounts of Whyte-Melville, following Maxwell in the DNB, give the date as June 19 rather than July 19. But this is corrected by Whyte-Melville's kinsman, Evan Balfour-Melville in the Times Literary Supplement, 23 June 1921, p. 404c, (under "Correspondence").

10. E. A. Baker, both in his History of the English Novel, VIII, 117 ,and in the Guide to the Best Fiction, new and enl. ed., 1932, ed. with James Packman, gives Whyte-Melville's name as George James.

11. DNB XXI (1900) 174,175 under "Whytt, Robert."

12. Same place.

13. Ellis, p. 103, states also that he was fifth in descent from John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough.

14. See references in Anstruther-Thompson's Reminiscences, Vol. I, especially pp. 13 (Anstruther-Thompson's own first hunt), 46, 133, and 143. Anstruther-Thompson himself was later master of the same hounds.

15. Locker-Lampson in 1883 speaks of Whyte-Melville's father as still living at St. Andrews. Nearly ninety, he still played golf and still had "a more jaunty air than George ever had" (My Confidences, p. 384). One of Anstruther-Thompson's correspondents wrote about the joviality of the elder Melville: "We had a dinner of old friends on Thursday at Sir Hope Grant's, and it would have done you good to see Melville and the Laird of Kilgraston in such spirits. As for Melville, though in years the oldest of the party, he was in jovialities the youngest" (Reminiscences, I, 401).

16. Nethercote, p. 264.

17. Same work, p. 267. Nethercote is the only acquaintance who speaks of these early days before the novelist's marriage, although, according to Nethercote, it was "easy to draw him out on the events of his bachelor-days, their vicissitudes, excitement, and extravagances; and the usual moral he drew from his own experiences was 'what d--d fools men are'" (p. 266).

18. Fortescue, p. 230.

## Footnotes Chapter III (Continued)

19. Whyte-Melville had often been at Crockford's in his early days, and had himself "on more than one occasion retired a poorer if not a wiser man, a fellow-countryman and brother sportsman having forwarded him sums to explicate him from difficulties that at the time seemed absolutely overwhelming" (Nethercote, p. 267).

20. At Boughton (according to Nethercote, p. 264) which was also his residence after the war.

21. Fortescue, p. 230.

22. Nethercote, p. 264.

23. *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, III, p. 511.

24. (London) *Times*, 8 December 1878, p. 5, col. f. Maxwell in DNB LXI, 173A gives the date as 1854.

25. According to Ellis, (*Mainly Victorian* , p. 103), Whyte-Melville lived for two or three years at Bertrams, Hampstead, where *The Queen's Maries* (1862) was written.

26. Lewis, *Fortnightly Review*, CXV, 998.

27. Same work, p. 709.

28. Nethercote, p. 270.

29. A letter to Anstruther-Thompson (I,312-313) is dated from Wooton Hall 26 February 1864.

30. "I go to Hooton either Monday or Tuesday, according to my wife's arrangements for a move to London," Whyte-Melville wrote Anstruther-Thompson in a letter dated "Wooton Hall, Northampton," 17 April 1866" (Anstruther-Thompson, I, . 371-372).

31. Anstruther-Thompson (II, 64) quotes a letter 17 November 1871 from 22 Onslow Gardens, London.

32. Nethercote, p. 270.

33. *Who Was Who 1897-1916*, 1920, under "Masserene and Ferrard." A son and heir, Oriel Foster-Skeffington, is mentioned. The Viscount Masserene and Ferrard was the great grandson of John Foster, last speaker of the Irish House of Commons.

Footnotes Chapter III (Continued)

34. Anstruther-Thompson, I, 312.

35. Same place.

36. He hunted from the city with Mr. Selby Lowndes and the Hon. Robert Grimston, the latter his chief companion on the hunting excursions (Nethercote, 270).

37. Maxwell, DNB, 173B. Also with Lord Rothschild's hounds in the Vale of Aylesbury (Underhill, p 183).

38. Fortescue, p. 233. The novels would be Satanella (Ireland) and Katerfelto (Exmoor).

39. See above, Note 36. Locker-Lampson said that he used often to meet Whyte-Melville in Fifeshire; also that he had dined in his company at Anthony Froude's (the historian); also at Stirling Crawford's, Langton Hall (Crawford's horse won the Derby in 1878).

40. According to Maxwell (Introduction to Katerfelto, p. xviii) the hounds had found but were still in covert, and the novelist was stealing forward for a start.

41. An account written by Archie Little to Anstruther-Thompson, quoted by the latter (II, 148).

42. Maxwell in DNB.

43. (London) Times, 8 December 1878, p. 5, col. f.

44. Maxwell, Introduction to Katerfelto, p. xvii.

45. Ellis, Mainly Victorians, p. 106.

46. In the World (Anstruther-Thompson, II, 149).

47. Anstruther-Thompson, II, 149.

48. Among the pall-bearers, the Duke of Beaufort, Marquis of Worcester, the Earl of Rosslyn, the Earl of Suffolk, and Lord Wolverton (Maxwell, in DNB). The Hon. Robert Grimston was present at the funeral (Anstruther-Thompson, II, 149). Lord Wolverton and Mr. Frederic Chapman, and Anstruther-Thompson were secretaries of the memorial fund (same work, II, 150).

49. [London] Times, 10 December 1878, p. 7, col. c.

50. Same work, 24 December 1878, p. 7, col. f. See also Anstruther-Thompson, II, p. 149.

Footnotes Chapter III (Continued)

51. Anstruther-Thompson II, 149. Whyte-Melville's father outlived him by five years, dying in 1883. Strathkinnes then passed to his kinsman, Mr. James Balfour, who assumed the name Balfour-Melville (Maxwell, in DNB).

52. Anstruther-Thompson, II, 150.

53. Same place.

54. For example, Anstruther-Thompson (II, 123) tells of arriving at a meet. "The first person I saw was George Whyte-Melville. He said 'Hullo! This won't do, you on foot!' He then went to Frank Lovell who produced one of the keeper's ponies."

55. This element of humor was mingled with a strain of melancholy (see discussion of Bones and I, below, chap. V, sec. 16). This melancholy is attributed by Maxwell (DNB LXI, 173A and Introduction to Riding Recollections, xiv-xv) to the fact that he was unhappily married, a fact that was common knowledge to all his acquaintances. None of the writers who sketch his life add to this brief statement.

56. To a friend who on a hot summer day replied to his genial greeting of "How are you, old boy" with "Oh pretty tidy, thank you," Whyte-Melville laughingly said, "I'm glad you feel it, you don't look it." (Nethercote, p. 266).

57. Nethercote, p. 272.

58. Maxwell, DNB, XXI, 172.

59. Nethercote, p. 265.

60. Same work, p. 266; also Locker-Lampson, p. 380.

61. Nethercote, p. 266. According to Nethercote, Whyte-Melville's reputation for wit went back to his bachelor days (p. 264).

62. "If asked how many animals he was master of this season, a favourite reply was, 'Not one ; but I have four beasts in the stable that are masters of me" (Nethercote, p. 266).

63. Elwin, p. 287. Elwin gives no source.

64. Same work, p. 288.

65. Nethercote, p. 266.

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Footnotes                    Chapter III (Continued)

66. Locker-Lampson, p. 384.

67. Maxwell, Introduction to Riding Recollections, p. xiv.

68. London Illustrated News, 28 December 1878.

69. Nethercote, p. 266.

70. Maxwell, quoted by Lewis, Fortnightly Review, p. 998.

71. Maxwell, Introduction to Katerfelto, pp. xi-xii.

72. Fortescue, p. 232: "I have been assured by one who knew him well that he was never really well mounted."

73. Nethercote, p. 265.

74. Same work, p. 266. (It was while he was slipping away for a start that he was killed.)

75. Work cited, p. 127.

76. Maxwell, Introduction to Katerfelto, p. x.

77. Maxwell, Introduction to Riding Recollections, p. xii.

78. Maxwell, Introduction to Katerfelto, p. x.

79. The same place.

80. Anstruther-Thompson, II, 10. The phrase was applied to Whyte-Melville by a speaker at a hunt dinner.

81. Maxwell, Introduction to Katerfelto, ix.

82. Maxwell, Introduction to Riding Recollections, p. xvii.

83. I.e., the saddle.

84. Underhill, p. 179.

85. Maxwell, Introduction to Riding Recollections, pp. xi-xii.

86. Work cited, p. 381.

87. Fortescue, pp. 232-233. A fact which the friend confided to Fortescue "with an air of bewilderment."

88. P. 381. But this is not a particularly helpful judgment, for it is not clear why a writer independent of his income from books might be less careful.

89. Maxwell, Introduction to Riding Recollections, p. xi.

90. Nethercote, p. 265.

91. The same place.

92. Maxwell, Introduction to Riding Recollections, pp. xi-xii.

93. Nethercote, p. 165. "Melville Institute" at Northampton.

94. Maxwell, Introduction to Riding Recollections, p. xi.

95. Work cited, p. 288.

96. Jeaffreson, II, 376.

97. At a Pytchley Hunt dinner held as a testimonial to Whyte-Melville's friend Anstruther-Thompson (at which Anstruther-Thompson was presented with a portrait of himself painted by Sir Francis Grant, the Frank Grant whom Whyte-Melville mentions often in his novels, the speaker calls Whyte-Melville "the most popular of our popular favourites." (Anstruther-Thompson II, 10).

# CHAPTER IV

## The Scope and Range of Whyte-Melville's Novels

### Section (1) Whyte-Melville's Subject.

During the middle nineteenth century the rise of the middle class and the growth of urban population and of the industrial system changed the pattern of English life. The Reform Bill of 1837 reduced the power of the landed gentry, and the repeal of the Corn Law in 1846 favored the urban industrial areas at the expense of the rural agricultural areas. The age of the country squire was nearing its end. But despite the threat of further changes the country squire enjoyed an Indian summer of existence for at least a full generation more.[1]

Whyte-Melville's novels coincide in time with this period and describe a mode of life considerably dependent upon the mode of life which was gradually changing. But his novels deal less with problems of rural and agricultural life or with that life itself than with the life of the sportsman-gentleman whom this society supported in careless leisure and within which values originally chivalric and Christian still persisted though in a thinned-out state. Rural problems are hardly touched upon.[2] Urban problems intrude only insofar as the rise of the middle class intrudes upon fashionable and sporting circles. In the historical novels the writer

expresses nostalgia for older ways; in the social novels he concerns himself almost solely with a static group, men and women alternating between country house and town house, sporting season and London season, apparently oblivious to quakings of the ground beneath their feet. His capacity, in fact, to cast a faint glow of romance over this cycle was evidently the quality which attracted a special audience of his contemporaries.

To a later generation Whyte-Melville's men and women and the society which he pictured became a symbol of a passing way of life. Galsworthy's representation of the Whyte-Melvillean character emphasizes the dandy and the sportsman. But other writers extend the picture. Here there is a bifurcation of interpretation. Two commentators,[3] attempting to trace in nineteenth century literature a continuous tradition bound up with rural England, the life of the county squire, and the English countryside, place the novels of Whyte-Melville outside the main stream, and find in another (and quite different) "hunting novelist," Surtees, and in such novelists as the Kingsleys, the past which they would recapture or discover still persistent in the present. Two other writers,[4] speaking of the same tradition, turn particularly to the novels of Whyte-Melville for their symbol. Careful reading of Whyte-Melville supports the view of the first two rather than the second two writers. For Whyte-Melvillean country-house life is an extension of

fashionable sporting life, not the rural life which these writers would include.[5] One of the two who turn to Whyte-Melville, in order to complete his sketch of the society which he speaks of, is forced to describe aspects of country life beyond Whyte-Melville's range;[6] the other bases his generalizations chiefly upon Market Harborough.[7] One other writer who turns to Whyte-Melville for his authoritative picture emphasizes the leisured life of the sportsman, a more accurate indication of the scope of the novels.[8]

It is not, then, wholly in a thorough and well-proportioned picture of a segment of Victorian society that Whyte-Melville's significance lies, but rather in the idealization of that life.[9] The emphasis of writers who praise him, upon "gallantry" and "chivalry" and "gentlemanliness"[10] supports this view. Whyte-Melville's novels will last as long as "chivalry in man and tenderness in maid have any hold upon English readers";[11] Whyte-Melville is "the finest type of aristocrat, a chivalrous high-souled gentleman, a cavalier born two centuries out of date";[12] his reverence for women is "chivalrous" and he wrote with conviction of ladies and gentlemen because he "knew them by heart as being one of themselves";[13] "his good breeding" and "his chivalry" are reflected in what he wrote;[14] he can "throw a halo of chivalry and poetry" around the noble sport of fox-hunting;[15]

> "And chivalry dawns in the merry tale
> "That 'Market Harborough' writes." [16]

Frederick Watson speaks of the same quality - somewhat acidly as suits an admirer of Surtees, for Surtees in his own time was not popular and Whyte-Melville was.[17]

> What, then, was the ideal of fox-hunters and that section of the general public sufficiently interested in sport? It may be found in the fiction of Whyte-Melville. His dashing, galloping, clean, and honest stories, his jingling verse of 'grey mares' and the rest of it, presented fox-hunting as the gallant cavalcade that squires and townsfolks like to think of it.[18]

This glow of idealization, as Watson suggests, attracted more than one type of reader. At the beginning, the families of fashionable West End sportsmen presumably found defense against two distinct attacks upon their ways of life. For with the end of the Regency a new type of dandy, the intellectual dandy who scorned sports, read philosophy, and turned his energies to grandiose political coups became vocal.[19] In addition, the cockney from the city began to venture into the hunting countries, resenting the airs and the assurance of the gentlemanly Meltonian.[20] But if the established fashionable society could find comfort in Whyte-Melville, so later could the rising middle class. For not all townsmen maintained the sturdy independence of a Surtees (whose independence was further buttressed by a fondness for rural agricultural life),[21] and many deliberately copies their fashionable betters and welcomed pictures of upper middle class society which romanticized the existence which they envied and emulated. In the 1860's and later this

romanticizing took exaggerated shape in the muscular posturing of a Guy Livingston[22] or in the sybaritic splendor of a Bertie Cecil,[23] beside whom Daisy Walters[24] is sober and real.[25] From this point of view, Whyte-Melville's novels can be seen as part of an extensive literature of the period concerned with the mutual adjustment of the upper and middle classes.[26]

## Section (2) Strains of Literary Influence.

Several strains of influence are apparent. The picaresque novel of military adventure as developed by Marryat (to whose Peter Simple Whyte-Melville alludes)[27] and Lever (whose Charles O'Malley Whyte-Melville also mentions)[28] is of particular influence upon the early novels. In the same tradition is James Grant. But like Whyte-Melville himself, Grant modifies the irreverent hilarities of Lever[29] and pays conscious tribute to the bravery and nobility of the young English officer.[30] Like Whyte-Melville too, Grant idealized the Cavalier tradition and wrote novels of the Seventeenth Century. With these may be mentioned Byron whose oriental tales provided action and with it emotion at the articulate level which hunting and men could understand. The Bride of Abydos is a favorite with young officers in Whyte-Melville, also in the novels of James Grant. But Byron's influence is pervasive and can be linked with elements of romantic melancholy in Whyte-Melville as well as with elements of social

satire.[31]

Another strain of probable influence is that of the Silver Fork School of fashionable life.[32] These novels were particularly influential from about 1825-1850,[33] the very period during which Whyte-Melville grew to manhood and during which he led the life of a fashionable bachelor officer-about-town in London. The historian of this movement completes his account with an analysis of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, and it is Thackeray--but the Thackeray of *Pendennis* and *The Newcomes*--who exerts direct influence on Whyte-Melville. With the intellectual dandy of Bulwer and Disraeli, Whyte-Melville's young men have little in common.[34] Although the Silver Fork School came to an end about 1850, it was continued with modification by Whyte-Melville himself and given new life by Lawrence and Ouida, in a vulgarized and sentimentalized catering to the pushing and ambitious middle class.[35]

A third strain of probable influence is the body of writing about hunting which began to develop in the early Nineteenth Century.[36] Here Whyte-Melville was more nearly a pioneer. Surtees had already created Jorrocks. But although Whyte-Melville admired Surtees, the author of *Jorrocks' Jaunts and Jollities* had little sympathy with fashionable gentlemen and their ways, and was not of the tradition.[37] More nearly in the tradition was John Mills whose novels glorified the country-gentleman who maintained at least the appearance of a stable and reared his son by Regency ideals

of dandyism however ruinous the state of his affairs.[38] Probably of more direct influence were the fashionable sporting journalists like "Nimrod" (C. J. Apperly,) whose famous Quarterly Review "run" is mentioned with respect in Whyte-Melville's early novels,[39] and like the "Druid" (Henry Hall Dixon).[40] Another of these journalists, "Brooksby" (E. Pennell Elmhirst)[41] is spoken of by sporting men as Whyte-Melville's successor and imitator.[42]

Of these three influences[43]--the picaresque novel of military adventure, the novel of society and fashionable life, and the literature of the hunt--the first is most apparent in the very early novels, the other two throughout the series. For the most part the pattern of the novels remains unchanged. (One clear shift in emphasis beginning about 1868 can be explained by changes in popular fashions and the possible influence of such writers as Henry Hawley Smart, George Lawrence, Mrs. Braddon, and "Ouida". The novels of Henry Kingsley are so thoroughly akin to Whyte-Melville's in spirit and attitude that it is difficult to resist connecting the two, but there is no evidence of influence.)[44] In his handling of these three strains, Whyte-Melville emphasizes the ideal of the English gentleman: it is the young officer of the novels of James Grant rather than of those of Lever that he pictures, Pendennis and Tom Newcome rather than Rawdon Crawley and George Osborne, and the fashionable hunting man of Apperly rather than the

Jorrocks and Soapy Sponge of Surtees. That this element in the novels was recognizable in his own time is indicated by the great popularity of Holmby House, a tale of the Cavaliers.

Section (3) Classification of the Novels.

Despite the overlapping and repetition of types of character, situation, and theme, which make one Whyte-Melville novel much like another, several patterns of variation and development can be traced. The main patterns correspond, with modifications, to the three chief types of influence just outlined, but other classifications are possible.[45] It is convenient to distinguish between earlier and later novels, drawing the line of division between The White Rose (1868) and M. or N. (1869), for at this point there is a definite shift in tone and emphasis. From this point of view there are fourteen "early" novels written during the 1850's and 1860's, and ten "late" novels written during the 1870's (but including M or N). A set of essays, Bones and I (1868) and a volume of verse, Songs and Verses (1869) come at the point of transition. Except for Black but Comely (1879) which was published posthumously, Riding Recollections (1878) was his last book.

Putting aside the historical novels, a rough distinction can be made between those books which attempt a large canvas and which mingle several different elements and

those which are more or less restricted to one aspect and one point of view. The distinction is worth making, for Whyte-Melville's talents do not include mastery of structure, and the superiority of several novels (particularly *Market Harborough*, *Inside the Bar*, and *Kate Coventry* of the early novels, and *Satanella* and *Katerfelto* of the later novels) is apparently due in part to restriction in scope or limitation of point of view. (On the whole Whyte-Melville's elaborate historical novels are better managed than the elaborate society novels.)

Again putting aside the historical novels, a distinction can be made between those books strongly marked by a vein of sentimental melancholy, in the early novels somewhat Byronic in tone and related to the downward career of a young man, and those which are not. Again, the most successful of the early novels (*Market Harborough*, *Inside the Bar*, and *Kate Coventry*) are relatively free of this, as is *The Brookes of Bridlemere* which is the most successful of the elaborate early novels and includes, except for this, more of the characteristic Whyte-Melvillean elements. The early novels most strongly marked by the vein of melancholy are *Digby Grand* (in parts), and *The Interpreter*, sporting and military novels, and the society novels *General Bounce*, *Good-For-Nothing*, and *The White Rose*.

## Section (4) The Chronological Sequence.

Whyte-Melville's pattern of fashionable sporting and society life does not appear in its most characteristic form at once, and the very first novels are more specialized, Digby Grand, Tilbury Nogo, Market Harborough, and Inside the Bar are dominantly sporting novels although Digby Grand especially anticipates the author's preoccupation with the London season. The Interpreter is dominantly a novel of military and romantic adventure, the most evidently Byronic of Whyte-Melville's work, and both Digby Grand and General Bounce include more incidents of military life than the later novels. It is in these novels that the influence of such fashions as those represented by Marryat, Lever, Grant, Egan, and Hook is apparent. General Bounce, Kate Coventry, Good-For-Nothing, The Brookes of Bridlemere, and The White Rose are dominantly society novels.

In chronological sequence, then, General Bounce, coming after the two sporting novels Digby Grand and Tilbury Nogo (for Digby Grand is more a London sporting-life novel than it is a novel of military adventure), is a transitional novel. It mingles elements which in the next four are worked out separately (then brought together once more in Good-For-Nothing): the comedy of fashionable West End and country house life, combined with sport, in Kate Coventry; the melodrama of love and dark passion, combined with military adventure, in The Interpreter; the Cavalier and chivalric romance of the

officer-gentleman-sportsman in Holmby House; and the comedy and adventure of the hunting field in Market Harborough. Three of these four novels gain by specialization and restriction. The Interpreter attempts too much and is the author's first experiment with a more elaborate plot, but Holmby House is an acceptable romance (and was very popular among contemporary readers) and both Market Harborough and Kate Coventry are among the author's half dozen best.

Beginning with M. or N. a clear shift in emphasis is evident.[46] Women become central characters of the stories to an even greater extent. Although they usually suffer and repent before the novel's end, they are in the mean time more self-reliant, harder, and rebellious; they are often outside society at the beginning and make their way into it by sheer persistence. Stories of young men spiraling to ruin in a career of gambling and dissipation disappear, and although young sportsman-dandies appear, they are relieved of the shadow of melancholy which hangs over them in the earlier novels, are brighter and more carefree beings, taking part in conventional love stories which are given secondary places. The men who now take central position are older and live apart from the stream of fashionable life, are often drawn back into it by their attachment to younger women: the aristocrat-soldier in M. or N., the General in Satanella, the Anglican clergyman in Uncle John and Black but Comely.

Despite a continuing element of sentiment, the tone of the novels is more nearly objective, characters are less articulately sentimental, less gushy, and the novelist more frequently records perceptions of the ironies of existence about which nothing can be done. Few modern readers would find these later novels objective or unsentimental or ironic, but such they are relative to the early novels. The difference in tone is perhaps evident less in the method of final solution within each novel than in the extent to which the writer sustains contradictory elements before resolving them artificially (by revealing unexpected moments and gestures of sentiment in otherwise hardened characters, for example, or by complete shifts and reformations of character, or by convenient disentanglement of complicated predicaments by equally complicated coincidences, not excluding sudden accidental deaths).

Among the later novels, M. or N., Contraband, Satanella, and Uncle John are a chronological sequence (interrupted by the historical novel Sarchedon) which develops the new, more self-reliant woman in Maud Bruce, Jin Ross, Blanche Douglas, and Laura Blair, although the last reverts half-way through the book to an earlier type (the suffering and self-sacrificing Ada Latimer of Good-For-Nothing). Two more "society" novels follow after this sequence of four, but a series of three historical novels and Riding Recollections intervenes. Of the last two society novels, Roy's

Wife attempts a slight gesture to the middle class by the story of Nell, a gentlewoman by nature though not by birth, who marries a gentleman. Black but Comely reintroduces the self-reliant woman of the first four "later" novels, adding gipsy elements from the historical romance Katerfelto, and repeating most of the scenes which have appeared in the other novels, as the heroine makes her way into society.

## Section (5) The Historical Novels.

The historical novels[47] which interrupt the sequence and development of the society novels follow a somewhat independent course. Of the eight, four deal with Cavalier or Jacobite background, two are "classical" novels, and two deal with the French court, emphasizing Cavalier sympathies which make these two somewhat familiar to the Jacobite novels in tone. Holmby House tells of Cavalier adventures centering around the martyrdom of Charles I; The Queen's Maries centers around the court of Mary Stuart, and Bothwell and Lord Darnley; Cerise, a complicated book of adventure begins at the French court of the Regent Duke of Orleans and ends with the Jacobite plot of 1745, in England; Katerfelto completes the series chronologically[48] in the story of a young blade of Jacobite loyalties, involved in plots of the 1760's. The Gladiators and Sarchedon are heavy and elaborate novels centering around the last days of Vitellius in Rome and the fall of Jerusalem and around the

career of Semiramis, legendary queen of Assyria. The last two brief historical novels, Sister Louise and Rosine, are set in the court of France; Sister Louise is Louise de la Valliere, mistress of Louis XIV (the sub-title, "The Story of a Woman's Repentance," indicates the Victorian interpretation); Rosine is a young peasant woman who joins her lover in support of the more sinned-against than sinning Louis XVI and his beautiful Queen.

Although at times the historical novels take on the tone of the social novels (in the domestic difficulties of Cerise and her English husband or in the suffering and repentance of Sister Louise, for example), they stand apart quite sharply as a group from the novels of contemporary life. They are superior in structure to the others.[49] For whereas the novels of contemporary life are indebted to the essentially episodic structure of the School of Lever, of journalistic sketches, and of such novels as Pendennis, the historical novels are indebed to a form developed by Scott, Bulwer, and Ainsworth.[50] And whereas the novels of contemporary life must submit to the limited pattern of fashionable seasons, a pattern which is too regular to permit the author a free hand, the historical novels deal with materials which can be more easily ordered to suit a preconceived structural scheme. In another way the historical novels differ--the writer's nostalgia for an imagined Cavalier glory[51] is recorded and his Chivalric-Christian view of life becomes explicit.

In this sense they are a gloss upon the society novels, clarifying the set of values implicit in them but not fully developed.[52]

## Section (6) Explanation of the Shift Beginning 1868.

The shift in tone noticeable beginning with M. or N. can be explained, presumably, by the fact that in 1866 Whyte-Melville moved to London from the country and had an opportunity to bring himself up-to-date with popular fashions. His stay in London (1866-1871) was coincident, too, with changes in the tone of society itself. For within the "mid-Victorian" period, about 1850-1880,[53] a period almost precisely coincident with Whyte-Melville's writing career, there were very noticeable sub-periods. Post-Regency morality, reflected in Digby Grand's strictures upon his own career, was succeeded by a period of restlessness in the 1860's.[54] Greater numbers of middle-class tradesmen had accumulated enough wealth to seek entry into fashionable circles. Lawrence Oliphant's Piccadilly (1870) pictures a working arrangement between indigent aristocracy and moneyed bourgoisie as vicious as the Anglo-American relationships of Maugham's Our Betters.[55] Fashionable life was revived at about this point, particularly led by the Prince of Wales.[56] (It was in 1870 that the heir to the throne created a sensation by appearing in court as a witness in a divorce suit.) Henry Hawley Smart in his first novel, 1869, commented that

"fashion is returning to the days of the regency."[57]

The social changes brought inevitably new fashions in popular literature. When Whyte-Melville returned to town life, Mrs. Braddon's "perfect circulating library novel,"[58] Lady Audley's Secret, a far more expert piece of writing and structure than any by Whyte-Melville, was four years old; one year after his return, Mrs. Braddon became editor of a new magazine catering to the renewed appetite for fashionable life, Belgravia, (Volume I, 1867).[59] That Whyte-Melville was full aware of her reputation--perhaps first became full aware of it during his sojourn in London--is indicated by the favorable comment he makes about her in The White Rose, 1868,[60] a novel which closes his early period and in a few details anticipates the later. "Ouida" was also at her height: Under Two Flags with its flamboyant portrait of the impeccable Bertie Cecil, the "darling of Belgravia,"[61] appeared in 1867.[62] Still another fashionable novelist who caught up several Whyte-Melvillean strands,[63] who wrote more thinly, but with a more sprightly, up-to-date, and topical air, Henry Hawley Smart, made his first appearance with Breezie Langton in 1869. Smart continued well beyond Whyte-Melville's time, writing more of the race track than the hunting field. Much of this literature met the growing interest of the middle class in upper class life.[64]

Whyte-Melville, who had been writing of the Belgravian cycle for fifteen years, must have found himself at

[illegible]

[illegible] in American literature. [illegible] Mrs. Southworth's [illegible]

[illegible]

once au courant of the popular subject matter and old-fashioned in manner. Probably his inbred gentlemanliness inhibited a full adaptation to the new demands, and to the end he remained something of an anachronism,[65] still speaking of "poor D'Orsay,"[66] or quoting Brummel's definition of a gentleman,[67] still quoting Lord Byron,[68] or the Duke of Wellington's praise of dandies during the Peninsular campaign.[69] But that he attempted to spruce up his young dandies is clear enough if one compares Daisy Walters of Satanella with almost any one of the earlier dandies. The moralizing is gone, so too the Byronic posturings, the melancholy of the dissipated young man to whom the future is a desert. His young women, too, are harder, capable of making their way alone by their wits and by their wit[70]--though in the end most of them suffer, repent, and pillow their heads on strong male breasts (or with broken and contrite hearts face the future with courage and with hope in their Redeemer).[71] The men who are the principals in love affairs are much older, experienced in the world at least though often easy victims for the young women who snare them.[72]

Whyte-Melville's inability to adapt himself (or his determination not to adapt himself beyond a certain point, whichever it may have been) was not without benefit. If he seems somewhat "quaint"[73] beside Henry Hawley Smart and "Ouida," he is considerably more solid than the former and by comparison seems serious in purpose, and he is more

restrained and genuinely aristocratic than the latter. Compared with "Ouida's" vulgarly lush portrait of Bertie Cecil, his picture of Daisy Walters is a model of good taste. (One *can* imagine young Galsworthy going down to Oxford infatuated with Daisy Walters, but even in his "unregenerate days" Galsworthy could never, one is convinced, have admired the impossible Bertie.)

Footnotes Chapter IV

1. See Fortescue, p. 227.

2. Contrast such novels as those by Charles Kingsley, with their interest in rural health (Two Years Ago) and social reform; or even such sporting novelists as Smedley who introduces irascible Tory squires who fulminate against the repeal of the Corn Laws.

3. Watson and Darton, works cited.

4. Fortescue and Pryce-Jones, works cited. For example: "Perhaps it is this continuity of landscape which makes the explicitly hunting novelists of the nineteenth century so large in evocation" (Pryce-Jones).

5. The Brookes of Bridlemere alone among the society novels includes enough of actual country life to be evidence against this generalization.

6. Fortescue.

7. Pryce-Jones.

8. Lord Willoughby de Broke, pp. 2-4, on the season of the sportsman. "The original picture from which this brief sketch is drawn of a certain aspect of leisured life is to be found in the novels of Whyte-Melville, who knew the whole subject intimately, and must be accepted as an authority." The writer of this dissertation is at a disadvantage in commenting on such judgments concerning Whyte-Melville, for he is not familiar with the country and life described and does not know what it is that may or may not be "evoked" in these novels. He is also totally unfamiliar with sporting and hunting life, even with horsemanship, having--if his memory is accurate--been on a horse once for three minutes at the age of thirteen. In this matter, then, his judgments are second hand and the dissertation a tour de force. But fortunately, many of the judgments made do not depend on such knowledge. A brief list of books about the literature of the hunt has already been given. Among the books of particular value in sketching the countryside and country life talked about are those by Watson and by Darton; also Lord Willoughby de Broke's writings, not only The Sport of Our Ancestors, but also The Passing Years, 1924, which Michael Sadleir in Anthony Trollope; a Commentary, 1927, p. 5, singles out for special praise in a larger context. The introductory chapter of Sadleir's Trollope is also helpful. The writer of this dissertation found Sassoon's Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man not

only a sensitive piece of writing but a special aid in the understanding of the society about which Whyte-Melville two generations earlier wrote his novels.

9. Neither Surtees nor "Nimrod" (C. J. Apperly), according to Maxwell (Introduction to Riding Recollections, p. xvii) "had the secret of Whyte-Melville's glamour, which invested the rapturous reality with an air of romance and gave to technical details the momentous import of the operations of war."

10. As evidence of the importance of this, see Sadleir, Trollope, 161: a Longmans reader, writing about the manuscript of Barchester Towers explained that "the grand difficulty of the work . . . as a work of art is the low mindedness and vulgarity of the chief actors. There is hardly a 'lady' or a 'gentleman' among them." This was in 1856.

11. Maxwell, quoted by Lewis in Fortnightly Review, CXV, p. 1003.

12. Ellis, Mainly Victorians, p. 104.

13. Fortescue, p. 231.

14. Times Literary Supplement 16 June 1921.

15. Anstruther-Thompson, II, 10.

16. Adam Lindsay Gordon, Poems, arr. by Douglas Sladen, 1912, p. 22 ("Ye Wearie Wayfarer," Fytte iii, lines 29-30).

17. Charles Kingsley's comment in Two Years Ago (Chap. xviii) is probably representative; he speaks there of Surtees' novels as "painfully true to that uglier and baser side of sporting life which their clever author has chosen so wilfully to portray" (words put into the mouth of Lord Scoutbush). Or, from a more recent writer but one who shares the Victorian gentleman's distaste, the "dull vulgar trash" of Surtees writing (Fortescue, 220). Whyte-Melville himself was more perceptive. Locker-Lampson (p. 384) records that he thought the not refined Mr. Jorrocks one of the most lifelike characters in English fiction, and in Inside the Bar (p. 252) Whyte-Melville has the narrator say "Do I not know and love Jorrocks." Watson (p. 244) states that only Whyte-Melville and Thackeray among the contemporaries of Surtees gave a word of enthusiasm or even of recognition to him, not excepting the hunting journalists. (See also objections to

the coarseness of Surtees by Kipling and Wingfield-Stratford, referred to by Wagenknecht, p. 202.)

18. Watson, p. 242.

19. Disraeli's Vivian Grey, still young, in society after spending two and a half years studying Plato at home: "Although his evenings were now generally passed in the manner we have alluded to /in the company of 'dames of fashion'/, this boy was during the rest of the day, a hard and indefatigable student" (Vivian Grey, Bk. I, Chap. vii). Bulwer-Lytton's Pelham admits that "there has not been a day in which I have spent less than six hours reading" (Pelham, Chap. lii) and that 'if I have any fault it is too great a love for abstruse speculation" (the same work, Chap. xxxiv). Whyte-Melville, whatever his defects, never put into the mouth of a character a speech like Pelham's: "Poor fool! It was not for a penetration like his to read the cor inscrutabile of a man born and bred like me, in the consummate dissimulation of bon ton."

20. R. S. Surtees, Jorrock's Jaunts and Jollities, Chap. i.

21. Watson, throughout.

22. In Guy Livingstone by George Lawrence

23. In Under Two Flags by "Ouida."

24. In Whyte-Melville's Satanella.

25. Lawrence Oliphant's Piccadilly, which revives somewhat the tradition of the intellectual dandy, shows the degree to which the middle class ambition had created special markets for bon-ton services.

26. For an interesting bit of evidence concerning the changes going on, and a touch of nostalgia in an unlikely place, see Aldous Huxley, The Perenial Philosophy, 1945, p. 140: "Symptoms of gentlemanliness can still be observed in the Napoleonic and Crimean wars, but the national Molochs were steadily devouring the eighteenth-century ideal."

27. Tilbury Nogo, p. 253. See also the next footnote.

28. Tilbury Nogo, p. 369. Sadleir (Excursions, p. 186) writing of Whyte-Melville's first novel, Digby Grand, says that it was in the tradition of the autobiography which came down from the eighteenth century, through Marryat, to a

dozen writers of the hard-drinking, riotous Forties. Elwin (Victorian Wallflowers, p. 284) believes that Whyte-Melville, Frank Smedley, Lawrence, and Ouida in differing degrees adopted the Lever model, but at another point (p. 229) selects Marryat as the representative of the tradition, and says that in Digby Grand and Kate Coventry Whyte-Melville "supplies a link between the earlier Captain Marryat and the later George Lawrence and Ouida." In the same place he remarks that in the 1860's the four key novelists whose work gained the most influence and imitation were Reade, Collins, Eliot, and Trollope. Of the hosts of imitators and derived writers "among the most picturesque was Whyte-Melville." But Whyte-Melville, as Elwin has already pointed out, derives from an older rather than a contemporary tradition.

29. Grant's Frank Hilton was pointedly subtitled "A Companion to Harry Lorrequer" (R. M. Lovett and H. S. Hughes, The History of the Novel in England, 1932, p. 289; see also Elwin, p. 284.)

30. The over-all tone of the novels by Grant and Whyte-Melville is sober, and there are no characters like Mr. Chucks of Peter Simple or Major Monsoon of Charles O'Malley, nor are there the impossible practical jokers like Daley of Hook's Gilbert Gurney, Webber of Lever's Charles O'Malley or Bracey of Smedley's Lewis Arundel. (This generalization is based on a reading of only two of Grant's novels, Frank Hilton and One of the Six Hundred.)

31. See further discussion of Byron's influence below, Chap. xvii, Sec. 3.

32. For a thorough discussion of the rise of this school, see Mathew Rosa, The Silver Fork School; Novels of Fashion Preceding Vanity Fair, 1936 (Columbia University Studies in English and Comparative Literature, No. 123), which discusses particularly Theodore Hook, Thomas Henry Lister, Plummer Ward, Lady Charlotte Bury, Disraeli, Bulwer, Mrs. Catherine Gore, and Lady Blessington, and ends with an analysis of the relationship of Thackeray's Vanity Fair to this group. Three of the four chief types of character to be found in the Silver Fork novel (Rose, pp. 28 and 30) appear repeatedly in Whyte-Melville's novels; see below, Chap. viii, the dandy; Chaps. xi and xii, the woman of fashion and the social climber. The match-making mother is almost absent, but see Mrs. Dove of Market Harborough.

33. Rosa, p. 7.

34. There is little evidence to support remarks that Bulwer's Pelham and The Caxtons was of influence on

Digby Grand. For further discussion of this point see below, Chap. v, Sec. 1. Although Theodore Hook, whose Gilbert Gurney is mentioned by Whyte-Melville, was one of the Silver Ford School, Gilbert Gurney has more in common with the school of Lever in spirit.

35. "Ouida" comes somewhat later in time though her career overlaps that of Whyte-Melville. "Her most immediate inspiration derived from George Lawrence and Whyte-Melville" (Elwin, p. 283). Lawrence comes earlier than Ouida, and Guy Livingstone has some affinities with Whyte-Melville's early dandies (particularly with men like Gaston D'Orville of General Bounce, 1855, written before Lawrence's Guy Livingstone) but fewer with Whyte-Melville's later ones. For a further discussion, see below, Chap. viii, Sec. 4.

36. This includes many books about the science of riding and the technical aspects of fox-hunting. See above, Chap. ii, Note 21, on the literature of the hunt.

37. See above, Note 17. Although a slight influence by Surtees is perceptible in the early novels, in the country scenes of Tilbury Nogo and in the horse-dealing scenes of Market Harborough, Whyte-Melville's interests and sentiments are considerably different. This is testified to by several readers of both novelists, including Nethercote (work cited, p. 269) who speaks from an acquaintance with Whyte-Melville and his audience, and Watson (work cited, p. 64) who writes with an intimate knowledge of hunting and hunting books. Baker (History of the English Novel, VIII, 117) is wrong when he speaks of Whyte-Melville as a rival of Surtees. Time has recognized the superior fecundity and vigor of Surees. By the end of the century, fashionable hunting men themselves had adopted the less modish novelist. "George Sherston" when young held conversation with another boy which consisted almost entirely of quotations from the novels of Surtees (Sassoon, Memoirs of George Sherston, pp. 153-154) and knew those novels by heart. It is interesting in this connection to notice the difference in space allotted to Whyte-Melville and Surtees in Bartlett's Quotations, 11th ed. rev. and enl. 1937, which presumably represents an older evaluation (despite the revision) and the newer Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 1941. The latter reverses the proportion, in favor of Surtees and provides two columns ofclosely printed quotations from his novels. Watson's study of Surtees is detailed and includes comparison with other novelists and with sporting writers of the time. For a convenient briefer account see Wagenknecht, pp. 197-202.

38. Our Country, 1850, and The English Fireside, 1844, for example. Mills, "a successful novelist of fox-hunting according to Watson (work cited, p. 188) had written also on D'Horsay, the type of Regency dandy. Titles of novels by Mills in the Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature indicate the general interests of the novelist. Supposing Our Country and The English Fireside to be representative, one must place Mills far below his successors (such as Whyte-Melville, Smedley, and others), his novels being trite in conception and language and thin and conventional in characterization beyond even these, though useful indications of fashions in reading. (It is in The English Fireside, that Mills has Squire Merton utter sentiments similar to those of Sir Peregrine Grand in Whyte-Melville's first novel: "It is the leading privilege of a gentleman," he tells his son, "to get into debt, and it is also one of his special privileges to remain in debt.")

Two other sporting novelists usually mentioned by historians are Francis E. Smedly, crippled author of three sports novels published 1850-1855 at the very beginning of Whyte-Melville's writing career, and Henry Hawley Smart, whose first novel was written 1869. Smedley's novels are more sprightly than Whyte-Melville's, somewhat self-consciously topical, and partly dependent upon a school-boyish exhibit of sporting prowess which Whyte-Melville does not imitate. Smart is a later writer who was influenced by Whyte-Melville, and who may have had in turn an influence on the older writer's later novels. (Smart's Breezie Langton, for example, Bk. II, Chap. V mentions the character Ada Latimer from Whyte-Melville's Good for Nothing with so little identification that it is clear he writes for an audience which is familiar with Whyte-Melville. One of Whyte-Melville's later novels, Uncle John recalls much of the story of Ada Latimer and returns somewhat to the earlier manner. But in returning to his earlier novel, Whyte-Melville seems also to have in mind the younger novelist who mentioned his earlier novel, for the opening scene of Uncle John is much like that of Breezie Langton /a young dandy meets on a train, a girl with a foreign air, who has just returned to England after several years of absence/ and the first part of Uncle John, the house party scenes, is much in the spirit of Smart's novels.

39. For references to Apperly, see Tilbury Nogo, pp. 17 and 21, and Market Harborough, pp. 150 and 239. Comparison of Whyte-Melville and Apperly is common. Whyte-Melville, an anonymous writer in the Times Literary Supplement, 16 June 1921, p. 377, remarks, has none of the

[illegible] Hale, for example, [illegible]

[illegible] Phelps-Ward's [illegible]

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26. [illegible]

Footnotes Chapter IV (Continued)

"stereotyped facetiousness" of the Druid and Nimrod. *The Field*, LII (1878), p. 724, in a notice of Whyte-Melville's death places Whyte-Melville ahead of Apperly in his hunting scenes, as a realist. See also Maxwell, Introduction to *Riding Recollections*, p. xvii, in which Whyte-Melville is credited with giving the hunting scene a glamor which neither Surtees nor Apperly could impart.

40. Dixon, according to Lord Willoughby de Broke was the only other writer in the same line as Apperly but was second *longo intervallo* (*Sport of Our Ancestors*, p. 120). According to the writer in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Dixon was about midway between Surtees and Whyte-Melville in style.

41. Frederick, *Fox-Hunting*, p. 313. For a detailed discussion of the writings of Apperly, Dixon, and others, see the discussion in Watson, pp. 64 ff. It is interesting to notice the emphasis placed on Whyte-Melville's hunting scenes by the fact that Sir Charles Frederick chooses as Whyte-Melville's successor a writer who was not a novelist but a sporting journalist.

42. An earlier type of novel had bridged the gap between the novel of fashionable life and the novel of sport. *Life in London* [Tom and Jerry], 1821, by Pierce Egan, with its sequence of boxing, racing, hunting, coaching, drinking and fighting with the police was tremendously popular in its day (Lovett and Hughes, p. 192). Bell's *Life in London*, favorite reading matter of Whyte-Melville's young sportsmen, developed from the sporting journal begun by Egan.

43. Another strain of influence discernible in the historical novels (see separate discussion of these) is summarized by Baker (*History of the English Novel*, VII, 117) when he describes them as "in the established style of historical romancing inaugurated by Lytton and Ainsworth and improved by a careful study of Dumas. Elwin (work cited, p. 229) traced in them particularly the manner of Harrison Ainsworth.

44. Elwin is the only reader to comment on this kinship between Whyte-Melville and Henry Kingsley. For further discussion, see below, Chap. XVII, Sec. 4. Other readers, however, have comments on Whyte-Melville's admiration for Charles Kingsley (Ribbesdale, work cited, p. 129, for example). *The Field* (LII [1878], 724) claimed that

"every line was instinct with the spirit which animated Charles Kingsley." But this seems to be a testimonial to the symbolic importance of Charles Kingsley's writing rather than a precise evaluation of the two as novelists. Whyte-Melville's allusions in the novels to Charles Kingsley are to the latter's poems rather than his novels (for example, Bones and I, p. 273, Riding Recollections, p. 68, and Black but Comely, p. 263). It is necessary, perhaps, to mention only two aspects of Charles Kingsley's novels which separate him from Whyte-Melville. He is the countryman, for one thing, rather than the townsman and has little use for the Belgravian sportsmen (see Two Years Ago, Chap. xxiv). Also he is a zealous social reformer and deals with intellectual and moral problems of young men and women. But the English-sportsman-gentleman code of Charles Kingsley is close, of course, to that of Whyte-Melville. It is interesting to notice that hunting as a countryman's sport is a natural element for the characters in Charles Kingsley's novels and that he draws upon hunting for figures of speech more often than Whyte-Melville himself. (For example in Two Years Ago, Chap. xxviii, where Tom Thurnall makes his reappearance. Mr. Arnsworth is talking. "Afternoon runs are pretty good runs; pretty sure of an empty fox and a good scent after one o'clock." A fresh voice breaks in from behind. "Exactly . . .and fox-hunting is an epitome of human life. You chop or lose your first two or three: but keep up your pluck, and you'll run into one before sundown; --I seem to have run into a whole earthful.")

45. Sadleir's classification of the novels (Excursions in Victorian Bibliography) is accurate as far as it goes and his estimate of Whyte-Melville (together with that given by Elwin in Victorian Wallflowers) the most comprehensive and understanding.

46. The shift is all but completed in M. or N., but looked at from this point of view, The White Rose is a transitional novel, including in its cast Vandeleur, a middle-aged lover, and Nora, who is firm and proud.

47. For further discussion of the historical novels, see below, Chap. vii, Sec. 1, and Chap. xvi, Secs. 1-2.

48. If one could reverse the first two novels, which are very close in time, this would be a chronology of sequence of publication as well as of setting.

49. Baker (History of the English Novel, VII, 233) says that in the historical novels Whyte-Melville "lacked

. . . the tact and schooling which made him almost as impeccable as Surtees himself in hunting technique." Although this is true of scenes, it is not true of total structures.

50. Presumably to Scott in such a novel as Holmby House or The Queen's Maries in both of which a young Scot (compare Quentin Durward) is favored by royalty, and introduced into court intrigues. (Whyte-Melville almost never attempts a Scottish flavor or the Scottish dialect, however.) To Bulwer's Last Days of Pompeii, presumably in The Gladiators (cp. Wagenknecht, p. 575). To Ainsworth's Rockwood (Black Bess and the gypsies) in Katerfelto. To Bulwer and Dumas in Sister Louise (Dumas'-Louise de la Valliere is one of the series begining with The Three Musketeers and ending with The Man in the Iron Mask, and Bulwer wrote a play about the same subject.)

51. Hugh Walpole and Michael Sadleir give testimony to the effect such novels had on younger readers. Sadleir (Excursions, p. 188) does not discuss Katerfelto because he does not want to spoil his childhood memory of its exciting glow, and Walpole (Royal Society of Literature, The Eighteen-Seventies; Essays by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature, ed. by Harley Granville-Barker, 1929, p. 32) remembers Whyte-Melville from childhood and thinks of him in terms of the historical novels: "brazenness was, I suspect, his finest virtue, gusto his grandest card." Brazenness and gusto are not the qualities the writer of this dissertation finds in these books.

52. Elements in the historical novels not found in the society novels: important military operations, glorious causes, empire-shaking political schemes, the rise and fall of dynasties. In the novels of contemporary life Whyte-Melville hardly touches upon politics, even the obvious subject of Tory resistance to the reform laws which affected the agricultural classes and large landowners. (Compare Smedley's Harry Coverdale's Courtship, Chap. xii, the country house dinner and the discussion of protection and free trade.) Occasionally a passing reference is made to the aristocrat who enters politics. (Lord St. Abbs in Satanella, a dull fellow in society but supposedly wise in politics, and Lord Mr. Helicon in General Bounce are two characters of this sort. Digby Grand censures Lord St. Heliers, who could have served his country in Parliament, and compliments the aristocracy for taking a renewed interest in public duties). In the historical novels, on the other hand, there are ambitious, scheming men, usually selfish, who plot intrigues: M. Stein

in The Interpreter, Malletort the priest in Cerise; Asserac the priest in Sarchedon; and in Holmby House the noble Falkland and the proud Mary Cave. Almost nowhere in the society novels, except for his clergymen and an occasional business man, is there a character who undeviatingly sacrifices personal pleasure for public duty. One should add to those who do, perhaps, the older Army officers who are concerned for their honor.

53. Sadleir, Trollope, p. 7, calls this one of the three periods of Victorianism.

54. For a convenient sketch of changes during the mid-Victorian period see the opening chapter of Sadleir's Trollope, pp. 3-25, "The Voice of an Epoch."

55. The book describes an elaborate mart, with young dandies who have connections but no money making a livelihood as "brokers" securing invitations for ambitious tradesmen and acting as sponsors during the season for social climbers. In Ouida's Under Two Flags, Bertie, jokingly considering what he will do if smashed, considers running a college for polite training: "We might have a Bureau where we registered all our social experiences and gave the Plutocracy a map of Belgravia, with all the pitfalls marked" (Chap. viii).

56. Sadleir, Trollope, pp. 21-22.

57. Breezie Langton, Bk. III, Chap. iv.

58. George Sampson, Concise Cambridge History of English Literature, 1941, p. 797.

59. Boston Public Library Card Index, under "Maxwell, Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Braddon."

60. P. 216. Miss Braddon "has introduced us at last to a more original style [of heroine] --to a young person with a good deal of red in her hair, and a refreshing contempt for many of our long-cherished superstitions including those inculcated by the Church Catechism, though it must be admitted that, however fascinating she may make her wicked witches, the right moral is always worked out in the end."

61. Under Two Flags, Chap. xii.

62. According to Elwin (work cited, p. 300) Whyte-Melville was among those who visited Ouida at her suite in London.

Footnotes Chapter IV (Continued)

63. See above, Note 38.

64. This was a period of great expansion in the circulating library and in the popular periodical. See Elwin, work cited, p. 228.

65. This explains why it is not straining probability to suppose that as late as 1878 in Black but Comely he was influenced by Thackeray's Vanity Fair.

66. The Interpreter, p. 173; Uncle John, p. 130; Roy's Wife, p. 60.

67. As he had done in his very first novel, Digby Grand (p. 116).

68. In his last novel. Compare for example, Smedley, who discusses in the 1850's the Browning school of modern poetry (Lewis Arundel, Chaps. xii-xiv). Or Smart who mentions Darwin (Breezie Langton, Bk. I, Chap. viii), and (following Trollope?) pokes fun at Exeter Hall and Evangelical bishops.

69. Uncle John, p. 30; Black but Comely, p. 282; compare Digby Grand, p. 205.

70. Even in the 1860's, the movement for the emancipation of women was hotly canvased by women writers (Elwin, p. 231).

71. See Whyte-Melville's own comment on Mrs. Braddon's novels, Note 60 above.

72. This is one of the very evident facts about the later novels. It substantiates Elwin's description (work cited, p. 290) of the shift in hero beginning with Lawrence's Guy Livingstone: "The popular tendency to prefer the strong man of the world arrived at maturity after an exuberant crop of wild oats to the gilded youth, described as sowing a modest harvest and settling down in the heroine's arms by the age of thirty-five." For a further discussion of the relationship between Whyte-Melville and Lawrence, see below, Chap. viii, Sec. 4.

73. Roy's Wife is one of the few novels in which Whyte-Melville tries to include topical and popular details (mention of Swedenborg, of the seance, allusions to South America, narrative of marriage to a girl who is not of fashionable rearing, boarding house scenes, picnic at Hampton Court, a description of the accomplishments of the "new woman"--all somewhat hesitatingly done without particular life and effectiveness).

# CHAPTER V

## The Early Novels, with Comment on Structure, Development, and Style.

### Section (1) Digby Grand. 1853.

Digby Grand, usually mentioned among Whyte-Melville's novels in brief accounts, merits this nominal attention chiefly because it was his first novel. In quality it falls considerably below even its immediate successor, Tilbury Nogo,[1] and exhibits weaknesses perhaps to be expected of an initial attempt. It records with an earnest doggedness the downward career of a young officer and dandy, a career ending in complete ruin to which is appended a reformation of character and a far rosier ending than the hero deserves. Most of the detail is topical--the places and events described are such that the London reader could have at least the elementary pleasure of identification. The detail is also underveloped, and the author rushes on from one scene to another, sometimes including several within one chapter, dwelling upon external detail, barely developing his characters, seldom developing the episodes into dramatic climaxes. Minor characters, with whom the book is loaded, are often barely named and identified as types before the sequence carries the reader beyond them so that they seemed to be catalogued rather than sketched. The main characters themselves, including Digby, are thin and shadowy, a few

receiving enough attention to be identifiable lay figures but little more. Plot itself is negligible and accidental (the paths of the chief character cross and recross without apparent cause or purpose), and the total effect is that the author exhausts his inventiveness in the mere act of naming people, places and elementary dramatic situations.

More fatal to the book than these structural weaknesses is the absence of certain talents which redeemed similar chaos in such books as Lever's Harry Lorrequer and Charles O'Malley. Whyte-Melville displays none of the anecdotal brilliance of Lever, none of the happy recklessness either. Nor does he have even the inventive fecundity shown by Theodore Hook in the practical jokings of Daley of Gilbert Gurney. Nor is he able to brighten the account with brief character sketches which bring scenes to life; there are no Major Monsoons in the story. To a great extent these weaknesses are evident throughout Whyte-Melville's novels: thinness of characterization, unsustained development of situation, limited scope, inadequate fertility of invention. But a difference of attitude also prevents him from making a completely successful use of the tradition of Egan, Hook, and Lever.[2] His attitude is one of basic earnestness, romantic seriousness, evident in this novel in his romanticizing of the Regency (with due early-Victorian strictures) and in his tendency to satire. Touches from the Byronic tradition and from Thackeray are an odd mixture, neutralizing the virtues

of the tradition of Lever.

From the very beginning it is with an intense and concentrated earnestness that Digby careens to ruin, to the continual accompaniment of moral reflection, and in the company of a set of characters frequently unpleasant, even vicious. This doggedness in the pursuit of dissipation and excitement contradicts in mood the zest in sport and high life which Digby pretends to at several points and creates an ambiguous tone, an alternation between what might become a high-spirited and lively farce of irresponsibility or a savage moral satire, but which develops into neither. What does emerge is a record of the variations of sport and chance with which a presentable young officer and dandy without oppressive military duties could concern himself if provided with enough ready money to make his way for a time, helped out periodically by coups at gambling tables, private card parties, or the race track, and more frequently by money lent by Jews on bills secured by the signatures of trusting friends or by post-obits on an inheritance. Digby becomes an expert at whist and a deadly accurate billiard player with semi-professional intent. In addition to availing himself of more orthodox gambling tables, he makes almost every namable sport a source of income.[3]

Before Digby is through he tries his hand--usually successfully--at nearly every form of sport. He either takes part in or witnesses moose-hunting in Canada (chap. ii);

prize fighting (chap. iii); fencing (chap. iv); horse racing (chap. vi and throughout); rowing (chap. viii); hunting deer and grouse in Scotland (chap. xi) with a duel thrown in for good measure; country games and hare hunting (chap. x); fox-hunting, in the provinces (chap. xi) and in the "shires" (chap. xv); all mixed with whist and wine. To Digby this is perpetual exhilaration. Before his first season is well begun he writes: "This is the element in which you can really exist; for this be contented to sacrifice comfort, competence, friends, fortune, and self-respect."[4]

Even at the start then, Whyte-Melville is already looking backward. It is by Regency standards and with reminiscences of Carlton House that Sir Peregrine Grand rears his son to be a dandy.[5] "Digby should be a man of fashion," the master of Haverley Hall tells his friend Dr. Driveller, and Digby records that his father's dearest wishes were centered on himself, an only child. "Not that he thought much of my morals or my intellect, but he took care that I should be a horseman and an unerring shot."[6] So it is almost with the satisfaction of accomplishment that Digby acknowledges in the course of his career that he has alienated those most dear to him.

Chapter i sets the pace of the book and carries Digby past Eton[7] under Hawtrey, past a meeting while on horseback with Gen. Sir Benjamin Burgonet who admires the young man's horsemanship and secures a commission for him in the guards, past a farewell dinner at Haverley Hall and a first dinner at the barracks, to escapades with Capt. Harry Levanter and a love affair with Fanny Jones, the Fort-Major's

daughter.

From the very first night at the barracks Digby is a success, and "Dandy Grand," as he has been known at Eton, establishes himself as a gentleman. His acquaintanceship with Captain Levanter has less happy consequences, for Digby, on a bet, recklessly tries to jump a gate in a dog-cart pulled by a "pair of quick high-stepping horses," his own property, and suffers a fractured wrist, sprained shoulder, and /the parallelism is Whyte-Melville's/ concussion of the brain. His love affair with Fanny, who nurses him after his accident, is no more successful. His passion for her ends when he overhears her "guilty tale" as she pleads with Levanter to marry her before it is too late and she has to marry Digby instead, to keep her good name. At the end of the chapter Fanny preserves her good name--by running away with Drum-Major Dubbs.

Chapters ii and iii recount the voyage of the regiment to duty in Canada. Horse racing there attracts the military, but Col. Cartouche, who completes Digby's education, and his protege are outwitted by a shrewd American, Squire Sawley, in an incident turning upon trial runs and race-track strategems. Digby carries on an idyllic love affair with the stately and noble Zoe de Grand Martigny which includes a trip to Niagara Falls. He completes his overseas experiences with a moose hunt in the Canadian forests.

Returned to England and stationed with the Queen's Guards in London, Digby ripens as a dandy as he joins the whirl of the London season--receptions at Apsley House, balls, theatre parties, at-homes, breakfasts and picnicks at Richmond, dinners at Greenwich, boating parties on the Thames, and masculine entertainment at Crockford's, Meadows' and Jem Burns". Mrs. Margery Man-trap, beautiful divorcee, takes him up, as does the influential and cynical man-about-town, Lord St. Heliers. Coralie de Rivolte, the Spanish danseuse and sensation of the season, adds him to her entourage, unintentionally--for Coralie has a good heart--involving him with her evil husband, the foreign Sarmento. Throughout all this he is abetted by fellow officers including the insanely melancholy Jack Hillingdon and the amiable and irresponsible Jack Lavish.

Digby's reckless gambling leads finally to a transfer into the dragoons (at a profit both to Digby and to the dealer in officers' commission) and to eventual ruin. He is finally estranged from his father and from the pure (and wooden) Flora Belmont, a Colonel's daughter to whom in his better moments he has professed the devotion due a good woman; slandered by the spiteful Mrs. Man-trap; cut by the

unfeeling Lord St. Heliers; cast off, in fact, by all his high-fashioned friends except the warm-hearted Coralie (who is unfortunately in Russia trying to straighten out a sinister domestic entanglement of her own) and his barracks friends. Aided by fellow officers, particularly the young cornet, "Little Nell" de Tassel, he escapes his creditors by a few yards on the back of his horse Jenny Jumps, only to be intercepted in the harbor just as he is to board the ship which would take him away from England--and his debts--as Gen. Sir Benjamin's aide-de-camp. (The General himself is escaping Lady Burgonet, the ci-devant Fanny Jones.)

With coaching by Levanter, now out of the army, he cancels his debts but ruins himself with post-obits. Then in the same paper which announces the marriage of the noble and neglected Zoe, he reads of the death of his father. The sale of Haverly Hall to pay off the post-obits completes his ruin and pushes him again into the hands of Levanter, now manipulating horse races, and Fanny Jones who is no longer Lady Burgonet and has returned to her first love. On the point of leaving for America, Digby meets by chance Tom Spencer. Tom had had to give up studying for orders when Digby had failed to make good a note for which Tom had signed, but he benefited by the enforced change of career and is now a successful wine merchant. Tom takes Digby into his business where Digby's knowledge of the fashionable world makes him very useful, so useful that eventually he becomes Tom's partner.

Others have fared poorly. Mrs. Man-trap is a croaking old hag clinging to the lowest steps of society. Lord St. Heliers, victim of years of excess, is a gouty clubman, barely able to walk. Fanny's end is equally just: visiting Haverley Hall on his way to Tom's wedding to Julia Batt (daughter of the Rev. Ames Batt, a cricket-playing clergyman), he meets a beggar at the stile--it is Fanny, once again cast off by Levanter who is now in prison awaiting transportation. But Flora Belmont, the good woman, has borne up under adversity. Long-deserted by Digby, she is still faithful despite the urgency, since her father's death, of a prudent marriage. Digby and Flora meet at Tom's wedding breakfast and are reunited.

Two sub-plots are completed, one happily, one not so. The law removes Coralie's evil husband, Sarmento, for her, and frees her to accept the attentions of her "cousin." Further, she is discovered to be the daughter of Col. Cartouche by the wife whom the Colonel had not seen since, years before, she stabbed her own sister (and the Colonel too) in a fit of mistaken Latin jealousy. The father and

daughter, Colonel and danseuse, tour the continent together with the cousin as the book closes. The second story to be completed is that of Jack Hillingdon who is finally led to suicide by his insane passion for gambling and his Gothic obsession with the ghost of his dead mistress who had languished and died after he took her from the convent in which she had sought peace from the struggles of her heart.

## Section (2) Tilbury Nogo. 1854.

Tilbury Nogo follows Digby Grand in its episodic structure and in its survey chapter by chapter of different forms of sport, but although slighter in scope and less pretentious in tone it is far superior to the first work. By defining the chief character more clearly, Whyte-Melville establishes a definite point of view and sets a tone more congruous with the subject. The air of resigned incapacity which the narrator assumes relieves the book of the absurdity of Digby's solemn noralizing and touches the scenes with a farcical unreality which is light-hearted. By dropping all pretense at an over-all plot, the author avoids the succession of coincidental meetings, usually without purpose, which weary the reader of Digby Grand, and instead allows stories to grow out of episodes that group themselves more or less naturally together. In addition Whyte-Melville advances considerably in his ability to develop incidents to a climax. Both in the scenes at Ascot with the clever and unscrupulous Cotherstones and in the scenes in the country during which Nogo is captured by the widow, genuinely amusing passages enliven the pages. Finally, the author has advanced in

characterization. Several of the persons of the play are sketched sharply and firmly--Segundo, foil to the bungling Nogo, a man of unknown antecedants but complete aplomb whether escaping creditors or riding to win in a steeple chase; Kate Cotherstone, the scheming beauty who attracts unwary young men to games of chance with her father; Mrs. Montague Forbes the amiable widow (who develops headaches and a sharp tongue after her second marriage); Squire Tepthorne, the surly, uncouth, old-fashioned country squire (one of Whyte-Melville's few sketches of this type).

Tilbury's eye for the attractions of the widow and his obliviousness to the reasons behind her sympathetic tolerance of his mishaps--mishaps, after all, which in no way reduce his income--supplements the more farcical humor of his continued catastrophes as a sporting man. There is further amusement in his surprised but patient acceptance of the change when the pliant Mrs. Forbes becomes the disciplinary Mrs. Nogo. Other possibilities of humor, however, are left undeveloped. Kate Cotherstone's reappearance as the wife of the sporting parson, for example, is made the occasion for rapidly developed pathos out of key with the rest of the book.

Occasionally Tilbury's reflections are swollen in style, but the author has developed a more useful manner than was evident in Digby Grand, and the nearest approach in Whyte-Melville to the anecdotal style of Lever.[7a]

The story narrates incidents in a career consisting of one misadventure after another (the sub-title of the book is "Passages in the Life of an Unsuccessful Man"). After a preliminary chapter in which the narrator records early examples of his bad luck during Eton days, the scene shifts for four chapters to fashionable Melton and fox-hunting. Tilbury invites there his friend A. Segundo, a young man of unknown antecedents, diverse accomplishments and considerable brass, and as usual Tilbury surrenders to him both Tilbury's own horses and the honors of the hunt. The visit reaches a climax in a single day's hunting of two runs: Tilbury gets cut off from the first run and never makes his way back through the maze of fences; riding well up in the afternoon run, he falls at a fence (which Segundo, on Tilbury's horse, has just cleared expertly) and fractures his collar bone.

After an interim chapter which records his recovery in London and an evening at Crockford's in the company of the dandy Jack Raffleton of the Guards (like Segundo, master of all situations and a foil to the fumbling Nogo), Tilbury goes to Ascot with Jack and a group of young sportsmen. There he is taken in by the Cotherstones and their brilliant company (including the stock French count, Count Favoris, and Irish officer and his wife, Major and Mrs. O'Cloverly). His infatuation for the attractive and clever flirt, Kate Cotherstone, makes him an easy mark for Cotherstone's card playing (Nogo is always given a seat where Kate at the piano can see his hand and transmit its values to her father by a pre-arranged code of diminuendoes and crescendoes).

Nogo's discovery of the situation ends his romance but leads to further difficulties--a challenge from Mr. Cotherstone, carried by the fiery Major O'Cleverly. But the duel is forestalled: during a practice session a hair-trigger pistol goes off in Nogo's hand, putting him out of the picture for several days during which Jack Raffleton arranges the affair at relatively slight cost to Nogo. (The London papers give Tilbury credit for meeting his man on the field of honor.)

Once more in London recuperating from his ventures, Tilbury is joined with Segundo and his companions who find Tilbury's resources very convenient. Tilbury takes instruction in boxing, but comes to grief after a somewhat boisterous dinner to which Segundo has led him. Considerably drunk, Tilbury tries to use his newly acquired science of boxing on an ugly hostler and is well-beaten. Still insisting upon his own sobriety, he smashes the carriage which he drives back to town. In the next incident another course of riotous living culminates in another dinner (Tilbury is still led by A.

Segundo) which puts Nogo hors de combat again. Doctor Dotterell, an enthusiastic sportsman, advises the country and fresh air.

The rest of the story divides itself into three parts: Tilbury's visit with the Rev. Josiah Bagshot, an athletic parson and old Etonian, at Wilton Cowslips; his visit with Squire John Topthorne of nearby Topthorne Lodge; and his married life first in a country cottage and then at Bath. At Jo Bagshot's the great danger is the attractive widow, Mrs. Montague Forbes, sister of the Squire. Tilbury's mishaps instead of alienating the widow throw him continually into her arms. He first meets her by getting in the way of her arrows at an archery match. When he joins the local cricket team (of which Jo Bagshot is the mainstay), he is put out of action by a cricket ball at the knee-cap and spends the rest of the afternoon with Mrs. Forbes. His relations with the family are cemented further when he rides Squire Topthorne's Saraband in the Steeple Chase, even though he loses--to his friend Segundo. (At the dinner that night, he nearly kills himself again trying to ride Shamrock downstairs at the Inn--after Segundo has successfully jumped the horse over the banquet table.) The summer passes; Tilbury continues his awkward way (he falls all over himself and the boat on a fishing venture), but advances in the favor of the widow. His danger becomes critical when Jo Bagshot is called away and Tilbury transfers his visit to Topthorne Lodge.

At Topthorne Lodge Tilbury's days are taken up with the Squire's kennels and with cub-hunting, his evenings with the widow and her music (after her marriage the widow loses her interest in the piano). His nights are full, as well, taken up by a Seventeenth Century ghost, the Lily of the Lea. When Jo Bagshot sets a precedent by returning with a wife (the clever Kate of Nogo's Ascot days!), the meshes of matrimony close tighter around Tilbury. Discovery one night that the widow walks in her sleep solves the problem of the ghost but compromises the fair widow herself (she awakens in Tilbury's room clad only in a night-dress, before her brother's eyes). The marriage follows shortly.

Mr. and Mrs. Nogo settle nearby until a disastrous run with Dr. Dotterell, the "Nimrod of the Pharmacopoeia," keeps Tilbury out all night and brings Mrs. Nogo's discontent and headaches (which Tilbury's experiments with a pack of harriers has aggravated) to a breaking point. Removal to Bath cures Mrs. Nogo, and ten years later she is still there. Tilbury himself alternates between Bath and his Munchausen Club in London, still eager for adventure, but aging and condescended to by the young members of the Club. (In the

meantime Kate has taken her clerical husband to Bath and has abandoned him for the young officer, Constantine Slopes, leaving Jo broken and old.)

In the course of the novel both Hook's Gilbert Gurney and Marryat's Peter Simple are mentioned. From the latter Whyte-Melville could have taken his conception of a character unversed in the ways of the world and easily deceived, but there is a great difference between Peter's simplicity which in Marryat's story is a virtue, one which ultimately triumphs, and Tilbury's fumbling failures. Hook's Gilbert Gurney could have supplied more. The incredible world of Daley's practical joking like the world of Tilbury's mishaps is created by repetition and accumulation. Gilbert Gurney, too, like Tilbury Nogo, during a visit to friends, falls in love with a neighboring girl (not a widow); her family (like Mrs. Forbes' brother) exerts silent pressure to bring him to the point; and Gilbert, like Tilbury, finds that when he has proposed, the object of his devotion changes almost overnight from compliance to proprietorship, just as Daley's brilliance was snuffed out after his marriage. In all this Whyte-Melville improves upon Hook, intensifying the sheer comedy of the situation which is mixed, in Gilbert Gurney's affair, with sentiment.

## Section (3) Scotland and the Moors.

Scotland and the Moors, a brief set of sketches, continues the character Tilbury Nogo, sending him, with his

friends King Cob and Beeswing, on a hunting trip to Scotland. Tilbury as usual is ineffective, whether hunting grouse or deer, but the emphasis is not upon Tilbury but upon the hunting itself. In the context of Whyte-Melville's works the three chapters which compose the book are interesting because they provide the one glorification of Scotland and introduce the only sketches of Scotsmen (an anecdotal Presbyterian divine, and Sandy, the huntsman) outside the historical novels, except for the doctor in The Brookes of Bridlemere. Whyte-Melville, apparently, was thoroughly Anglicized, but the Scottish background is important to an explanation of his Toryism, his fondness for Cavalier ideals, and (in the later novels at least) his sympathy with aspects of Anglo-Catholicism and Roman Catholicism. (In religion, however, he remained what one would call "Evangelical.") For in Scotland, Cavalier and High Church traditions fed sturdily on opposition.[8] But although Whyte-Melville was thoroughly Anglicized, there is no evidence to suggest that he was the obnoxiously Anglicized Scottish dandy who fears that at any moment he will betray his origin (a type described satirically by James Grant).[9] More likely, Whyte-Melville felt that his handling of Scottish dialect and Scottish character would be uncertain.

## Section (4) General Bounce. 1855.

In content and structure General Bounce anticipates the later society novels, at the same time including earlier

elements shortly to be subordinated. Most of the particular scenes which appear in the novel, scenes of country sport and London society, have been recorded already in Digby Grand or Tilbury Nogo, but here they are put together with a double love story and in a sequence which is to be used many times again, first the hunting season in winter and spring, then the London season in May and June, finally as the novel closes, the hunting season again in the fall. Several characters to reappear frequently in later works are introduced here, particularly the amiable young officer-dandy-sportsman (Charles Kettering), the young and attractive horsewoman, spirited but feminine (Blanche Kettering, prototype of Kate Coventry), and the elderly campaigner (General Bounce).

The structural importance of the cycles of fashionable seasons throughout the novels is considerable, for this cycle provided the novelist with a natural pattern at once part of the life he continually portrayed and sufficiently regular to serve as a formal pattern with advantages of cumulative repetition.[10] Whyte-Melville apparently recognized this, for the arrangement is followed partly or wholly in many of his works. But he often violated it instead of intensifying it, perhaps driven to variation by the dangers of monetony. In his departures from it he is usually infelicitous. The pattern of the cycle of the seasons is important to the novels in another way. Limited in range, lacking imaginative depth, Whyte-Melville is most successful with surface pictures of

society and sport, and his most successful scenes are those which provide him with a set pattern which runs itself out, requiring chiefly enlivening touches of heightened characterization: the fox-hunting run, the steeple-chase; the country house party or provincial ball; the London at-home, or picnic, or theatre party, or ride in Rotten Row. When restricting himself to such surface pictures, he can frequently hint with some effectiveness at deeper currents flowing below; when attempting to probe the deeper currents he tends towards rhetorical sentimentality. The most successful novels (Kate Coventry, Market Harborough, and Satanella, for example) are the best evidence for these generalizations. Whyte-Melville himself appears to recognize the importance of these basic patterns as a protection against ventures into uncharted seas, but does not fully perceive the potentialities of these patterns as the basis for artistic structure.

General Bounce can be considered as a first-novel experiment since it is the first novel to use a pattern which was to become basic. Except for the scenes of Blanche's ventures into London society which are handled with relative deftness, there is little to attract the reader. Mary Delaval, the governess, is of some interest, for though she spends most of the novel in silent suffering, at the beginning she shows signs of the self-reliance which was to be developed in the heroines of the "later" novels.

The plot of General Bounce centers on a quadrangular love affair concerning two couples, Charles Kettering and Mary Delaval, and Blanche Kettering (Charles' cousin) and Frank Hardinstone. Throughout most of the story the two cousins are supposed by all the others, including Mary and Frank, to be in love, and the family has taken their eventual marriage as a matter of fact. Most of the details concern the two cousins, including, after opening chapters in the country, Charles' experiences and casualty as a young officer in Africa against the Kaffirs, and Blanche's experiences in London society while Charles is away. Blanche's success in London is ensured not only by her beauty but by her reputation as an heiress as well, and she is the object of earnest attention from several impecunious young dandies and officers. Rumor that she is not, after all, an heiress, cuts across her first London season and reveals a disillusioning change of intention among several of her suitors.

Interwoven with the experiences of Charles and Blanche are those of Frank Hardinstone and Mary Delavel, both of whom are foils, Frank for Charles and Mary for Blanche. Hard-headed and overserious, Frank is a young country gentleman, contemptuous of frivolity and lightness, a student of mathematics and engineering. His pursuit of Blanche both in the country and in London takes place somewhat at a distance, for his honest plainness is no match for the talented gallantries of Blanche's admirers. He alternately withdraws from the battle, his aloofness a reproof to Blanche's giddy (but always proper) whirl, and returns to the melee when his infatuation overcomes his judgment. His hesitancy of approach is the cause of occasional comedy, and his pride prevents the solution of mutual miscomprehensions until the very end of the book.

Mary Delaval, "Mrs." Delaval, schoolmistress and music mistress, is governess-companion to Blanche. Dark and beautiful, she shows a strength of character due in part to her personal history of continued struggle to make her own way in the world (she was an illegitimate child) and in part to her firm reliance on God. She loves Charles at a distance, thinking he is to be Blanche's. Even at the end of the story she must face years of silent suffering (and work among the poor), for Charles, who finally confesses his love for her, never recovers from the wound received from a kaffir. He dies at the end of the book, nursed during his last months by the woman he loves.

Other characters include Gingham, Mrs. Kettering's maid, who leaves when Mrs. Kettering dies, and gives her heart to Tom Blacke, a rascal who goes from bad to worse.

Before the story is over Gingham sadly follows the coffin of her young child, the victim of neglect, to the cemetary. This sub-plot is tied to the main story by the fact that Gingham has carried away with her Mrs. Kettering's unsigned will leaving all but an eighth to Charles, and it is her forgery of a signature to the will, to which Tom forces her, that blights the gaiety of Blanche's season. One other character from the "lower" classes is a foil to the city rascal Tom Black: Hornblower, an honest, hardy seaman, who appears occasionally at the right moment to save Frank (his benefactor) or Charles (often both) from drowning or shipwreck, and who comes to the rescue near the end of the book when Tom and an accomplice burlarize the home of General Bounce.

Town dandies, stock characters in Whyte-Melville's novels prance before Blanche the heiress for several chapters. One, Sir Ascot Uppercrust, disinclined to marriage but in desperate need of funds, proposes haltingly to Blanche and to his own relief is rejected. Another, Lord Mt Helicon, an aristocratic writer of verse and novels of fashionable life, whose fortunes need replenishing and whose mother Lady Mt. Helicon sets him after Blanche with carefully laid schemes, is saved from the embarrassment of a proposal by the quickly spreading rumor that she is no longer an heiress. (One of the more skilfully handled scenes in the book is that in which Blanche, accompanied by the General, attends Lady Mt. Helicon's "at home" and enters the room the only one present who does not know that she is no longer an heiress.) Honest little Bob Lacquers, as destitute as most of the other dandies, proves that sound hearts may beat beneath a dandy's uniform and proposes to Blanche at the same at-home, despite the news, and is gently rejected. At least one of the dandies who hover around Blanche is spared for Mary Delaval: Major D'Orville, jaded man of the world who had burned out his youth in fast living, dreams of achievement and the hand of a good woman. Firmly put aright by Mary--she writes him a moral lecture as well--he determines nevertheless to lead a better life (a siege of brain fever helps to complete his reformation) and he and Lacquers leave for foreign fields and the call of duty.

General Bounce, Blanche's Uncle Baldwin, who takes the two cousins under his care at the death of Mrs. Kettering, is also the prototype of several later characters. Simple, honest, kindly, but occasionally irascible and frequently something of a martinet, he does not understand the difficulties in the way of a union between Charles and Blanche, in whom he exists. He finds new life in Charles' military career, and Charles' illness and death is a great

blow to him. One further blunder makes him comically pathetic: he gradually comes to interpret Mary Delaval's coldness towards all men as a sign that she loves him. Discovery of the true situation saves him from exposing himself to ridicule just as he is on the point of considering a romantic venture.[11]

Adventure abroad (which Whyte-Melville continues in The Interpreter and, to a less extent, in Good for Nothing and The White Rose) is supplied by an account of Charles' brave leadership against the Kaffirs in Africa, his wound and long siege of melancholy illness in the hospital, the arrival of Frank (whom Mary Delaval has spurred to seek Charles out after news that Charles id dead), the return voyage, the storm, and shipwreck near England, and the timely appearance of Hornblower to the rescue. The kaffir expedition gives the author an opportunity to laud the British Empire and the Army, and to give intimate glimpses of the hardships and cheerful bravery of camp life.

## Section (5) Kate Coventry. 1865.

Kate Coventry, a light and pleasant tale[12] of the courtship and activities in society and on the sporting field of a spirited, somewhat hoydenish, but still feminine young woman, deserves the mention it usually receives in histories which give only a passing comment on Whyte-Melville. Though its subject matter is characteristic of the society novels, the structure of the book is not. The difference is due in part to the fact that the author limits the point of view by having Kate herself tell the story through entries in her diatry. Attempting dramatic appropriateness, the author simplifies and restrains his style, pruning from it much of the heavy moralization which weighs down other novels. The result is an effect of more rapid tempo and of a brighter and

shrewder intelligence at work. In addition the number of characters are reduced, the scope of the action limited. Events are connected and unified as they are not in General Bounce. Like the first two novels, Kate Coventry is episodic in structure, but the episodes form one continuous sequence. In this Kate Coventry is superior to Tilbury Nogo. It is superior to Tilbury Nogo (and far superior to Digby Grand) in the author's ability to bring each separate chapter to a point or climax, one integrally related to Kate's own character.

Blanche Kettering of General Bounce with her bay, Water King, is the immediate prototype of Kate Coventry and her Brilliant and White Stockings. Kate herself is the first of several similar heroines throughout the novels. At this point in the series she represents daring in young women: "Next to being attractive to the other half of creation--and that I can easily understand--is totally unpardonable," she writes,

> there is nothing makes a woman so angry with her sister as high spirits, natural courage, and above all, a love for a horse. . . .Must pluck and piety be forever divorced in the female character? Shall I never be able to keep the straight path in life, because I can turn an awkward corner with four horses at a trot?[13]

Later the Kate Coventries take a subordinate place, and Jin Rosses (in Satanella) who do not trouble themselves to couple piety with their courage (at least during the first three quarters of the novel) and who are outside society at the start and so less sensitive to the opinions of their "sisters", take their place.

For the most part the plot concerns Kate's relations with her young guardian and first cousin, John Jones, gentlemanly, sporting, but in Kate's eyes somewhat plain, and with the dashing young Captain Lovell, handsome, fast, and practiced in the ways of flirtation. At the beginning of the story, John is the pleasant but dull companion of her rides and outings, particularly useful because her Hannah-More-reading Aunt Deborah Horsingham will permit her to go many places with John to which she could not go otherwise.

It takes several chapters for her to realize Cousin John's worth and the shallowness of the dashing Captain who is merely having an amusing flirtation with her while he pursues a more serious occupation, the search for an heiress sufficiently well off to get him out of debt. In the meantime there are rides in Rotten Row, parties at Richmond and Vauxhall, attendance at the races (Ascot and Hampton); then after the season, a visit at Dangerfield, the estate of Lady Hersingham, Kate's aunt, and one to the more interesting Scamperly Park where Lady Scapegrace entertains her and the loud dissolute Sir Guy presses unwelcome attentions upon her. All the shile she is pursued by the Captain and accompanied by Cousin John.

Her chief joy is riding, not only in the Row during the season but to the hounds, both fox and buck. Cousin John takes her to ride to the Queen's Hounds where for a while she leads the field. But her pride leads to a fall and some quite feminine distress. Like Blanche's Water King, Kate's Brilliant and White Stockings are important characters in the story.

Her energies lead her into other exploits. At the party at Richmond Park she saves Lady Scapegrace by courageously confronting and driving back a bull which is about to attack them. At Scamperly Park she drives a four-in-hand recklessly and smokes a cigar. Later during her visit, she takes refuge in what turns out to be Captain Lovell's rooms, hides in the shower bath when Frank enters unexpectedly, thus hidden discovers both Frank's insincerity and John's nobility, escapes eventually by a quick dash when Frank is at the window, blowing out the candles as she runs past.

Subordinate characters provide variety and broaden the scope of the story. Aunt Deborah is proper, proud of the family (especially of the Horsingham hand, a vanity which the skilful Captain Lovell takes advantage of when he first calls), and disapproves of Kate's boyish ways, especially her morning rides. Aunt Deborah's incapacity to refuse Cousin John any request is based on a youthful romantic attachment

for John's father, now dead.

Both Mrs. Lumley and Lady Scapegrace, though rivals, cultivate Kate. Fast, possessed of a "satirical tongue," Mrs. Lumley though not actually a widow has freedom enough, for her retiring husband allows her to go her own way. Mrs. Lumley is Kate's instructress in the ways of the world, not without good sense, but at the same time "fast" and a foil to set off Kate's honesty and innocence. Lady Scapegrace, described by Mrs. Lumley as "like a tragedy queen but passe," is a somewhat unsuccessful yoking together of two different characters. Motivated by hatred and contempt for her dissolute, philandering husband, she keeps her head up haughtily in London society; on her own estate she tends the poor with compassion and patience. She tells the story of her tragic mistake in love to Kate in order to prevent Kate from making a mistake with Captain Lovell.

Kate has her opponents as well. Her love of sport alienates several of her own sex. Her aunt, who reads Eighteenth Century classics aloud, disapproves of Kate's ways and tyrannizes over her until Kate masters her aunt in a violent tiff. Kate's prissy, mincing cousin Amelia, timid and delicately lady-like, throws Kate's high-spiritedness into relief. Kate has rivals too: the "yellow" (but wealthy) Miss Molasses to whom Cousin John pays incomprehensible attention and with whom Captain Lovell finally decamps, and the distant Fanny Lloyd in Wales, whom Cousin John visits and whom rumor connects with John in intimations of romance.

One more admirer must be mentioned, the red-faced clumsy country bumpkin Squire Haycock, neighbor of the Horsinghams, who upsets the entire Horsingham household when his proposal of marriage turns out to be for Kate instead of the simpering Amelia (whom he marries, eventually, nevertheless).

## Section (6) The Interpreter. 1858.

In The Interpreter, Whyte-Melville attempts to capitalize on his experiences in the Crimean War, padding out campaign scenes with a chaotic plot and stock trappings of romanticism, including a hero who leaves England to wander, a despairing Childe Harold, over the face of the globe,

scenes in the wilds of Hungary with foreboding gypsy prophecies, and an Oriental tale in weak imitation of Byron and Moore. (Whyte-Melville takes the name of his Oriental heroine, Zuleika, from Byron's The Bride of Abydos, and the climactic incident--the punishment of drowning as revenge for infidelity--from The G~~r~~iaour.)[14] If the historical novel Cerise be excepted, The Interpreter is Whyte-Melville's only novel of roaming adventure. Brief incidents occur in three other novels: General Bounce (Charles' campaign against the Kaffirs in Africa), Good for Nothing (Gilbert Orme's year in Australia), and The White Rose (Gerard Ainslie's experiences in the gold fields). Romantic melancholy has been introduced into Digby Grand (in the character of Jack Hillingdon); traces of it show in the treatment of Orme in Good for Nothing and of Ainslie in The White Rose. In the later novels Whyte-Melville avoids such heroes.

Chapters xviii to xxi of the novel describe action with the Turkish Irregulars against the Russians, and Chapters xxxvi-xxxix describe the siege of Sebastopol and the fall of the Redan, including a retrospective account of Balaclava and the Charge of the Light Brigade and occasional allusions to Alma. The scenes with the Turkish Irregulars are enlivened by personal adventure, but the scenes before Sebastopol lack cumulative power and are marred by the same rhetoric and mawkish sentiment which made Charles' campaign among the Kaffirs at points almost unreadable. Additional

scenes in Constantinople recording the polyglot mixture of people and incidents at Messire's (the English hotel mentioned in several of the Victorian novels about the Crimea) are undistinguished but more successful.[15] (After _The Interpreter_ Whyte-Melville limits his battle scenes to the historical novels, particularly _Holmby House_, _The Gladiators_, and _Sarchedon_. In these he is more effective although still conventional, depending upon massed movements, colorful exploits, plotted adventures of the principal characters, and the tone of a romanticized past for effect.)

For emotional intensity Whyte-Melville adopts a wearying rhetorical style. When Vere Egerton records the scene in which his father tells him of his mother (a story almost identical with that of Jack Hillingdon in _Digby Grand_), he writes:

> "She drooped like a lily with a worm at its core. For one short year I held her in my arms; I did all that man could to cheer and comfort her--in vain. She smiled upon me with the wan, woeful smile that haunts me still; and she died, Vere, when you were born." My father hid his face for a few seconds, and when he looked up again he was paler than ever.
>
> "My boy," he murmured, in a hoarse, broken voice, "you have been sacrificed. Forgive me, forgive me, my child; you are _illegitimate_."
>
> I staggered as if I had been shot--I felt stunned and stupefied--I saw the whole desolation of the sentence which had just been passed upon me. Yes, I was a bastard. . . .Never again must I hold my head up amongst my fellows. . . .Never, never think of Constance more! It was all over now; there was nothing left on earth for me.[16]

So Vere leaves England to wander in search of rehabilitation.

Before he leaves, he has a chance to save Constance from drowning when her boat overturns on the lake. He conceives of the act as one which makes Constance his.

> She fainted away when she was fairly on the bank; and I was so exhausted I could but lie gasping at her side. . . . Oh, selfish heart! I felt that had I not succeeded in saving her, I had rather we had both remained under those peaceful waters; but selfish though it may have been, was it not ectasy to think that I had rescued her--Constance Beverly, my own Constance--from death? I, the ungainly, unattractive man, for whom I used to think no woman could ever care; and she had called me "her brave Vere!" HERS! She could not unsay that; come what would, nothing could rob me of that. "Fortune, do thy worst"; I thought, in my thrill of delight as I recalled those words, "I am happy for evermore." Blind! Blind![16a]

Chaotic in construction, The Interpreter is difficult to summarize. Action takes place in three chief locales: England at the neighboring Beverly Manor and Alton Grange; Hungary at the estate of Count Victor de Rohan, in the midst of wild and romantic scenery; the Crimea, with scenes of war and romantic incidents of Turkish and Arabian life. Although a different set of characters is connected with each locale, a few move from one to the other connecting the incidents, particularly the hero Vere Egerton and Ropsley the villain. (This structure clarified and elaborated is used later in the historical novels, particularly The Gladiators, Cerise, and Sarchedon.)

Vere Egerton, dark, sensitive, ugly in physical appearance, the son of an artist, does not remember his mother. His father, once prominent in the fashionable Regency world, leads a lonely, isolated life which intensifies the boy's tendency to withdrawal and introspection.

Early chapters record childhood memories of a visit to Hungary and the De Rohan family, and later his days at school where the young Count Victor de Rohan is his companion and where he first comes to know Ropsley who is already a self-centered climber, a confident and unscrupulous master of his own destiny. At this time too he meets Constance Beverley, daughter of Sir Harry, his father's neighbor and acquaintance. Their seemingly ill-fated love begins here.

The plot begins to develop when young Vere, through with school, comes to live with his father at Alton Grange near Constance's home. There Ropsley comes, too, already scheming his way in the world, and sets himself between Vere and Constance's father. Sir Harry is in debt despite the appearance of landed prosperity, not only in debt but soon in debt to Ropsley and under his power. At this point Vere's father dies, making a deathbed confession that Vere is illegitimate. Only Sir Harry shares the secret. (Vere's father, returning to Vienna to find the girl whom he loved two years before, discovers that Elise has chosen to take the veil rather than submit to a marriage arranged for her by her family. Egerton takes her from the convent, but despite a period of delirious happiness, she pines and dies.)

Vere, now desperate, sets out for a career of adventure, determined to make a name that will enable him to face Constance and Sir Harry, and he leaves the field in possession of Ropsley. Ropsley takes advantage of his opportunity. At his encouragement, Sir Harry has made investments which have turned out badly. Ropsley, in breaking the news to him, has a remedy: Ropsley will sell his one untapped resource, land in Ireland, if in return Sir Harry will give him Constance. Sir Harry cannot force Constance from her indignant refusal, but neither can Sir Harry shake off Ropsley.

With Victor de Rohan, Vere takes service with Turkish troops, his knowledge of languages qualifying him as an interpreter. Omar Pasha, the Turkish generalissimo, turns out to be the Austrian deserter to whom, years before at the De Rohan's, Vere had given a boy's passying sympathy and aid, a debt which Omar remembers. In an exciting adventure (Vere is captured by the Turks, but escapes, with the aid of Ali Mesrour, the Beloochee), Vere is wounded and returns to Hungary to recuperate as a guest of the De Rohans.

The De Rohans represent the patriotic Hungarian nobility suffering under Austrian tyranny. Valerie, Victor's handsome and fiery sister, is stronger in character than her brother. Mr. Stein, the cold omniscient Austrian inspector of police, and Comtesse Rose, Princess Vocqsal,

his beautiful, clever agent, threaten the safety of the De Rohans. The Comtesse Rose uses Victor de Rohan's infatuation with her as a means of getting information for M. Stein.

Sir Harry and Constance Beverley, touring the continent and accompanied by Ropsley, arrive in Vienna. The tortured love between Constance and Vere is renewed. Constance has steadily refused to marry Ropsley, but can hold out little longer against her father's insistence on a favorable marriage which will enable him to pay his debts, especially those to Ropsley. (Her resistance is broken when Ropsley, as the reader finds out later, convinces her that Vere is in love with Valerie de Rohan.) Vere leaves for foreign fields once more after an episode at a masked ball in Vienna at which he tells Valerie de Rohan, as he supposes, of his outcast state and hopeless love, and finds that he has poured out his heart to Constance herself. Constance tells Vere that she has consented to become the wife of Victor de Rohan. (Victor does not love her but is willing to take a wife in order to have a cover for his infatuation with the Princess who is herself married to an aging and dissipated sportsman-roue.)

Vere returns to the Crimea where the English are now engaged. After adventures in Constantinople (including an attempt to rescue a woman from a Turkish harem), he witnesses the siege of Sebastopol and the fall of the Redan. Old acquaintances show up, including Manners the school usher, now a swaggering and posturing officer in the Bashi Bazooks. Inevitably Ropsley, too, appears, cool as ever but somehow changed. This sequence of scenes ends when Vere accompanies Ropsley, weak after a siege of the fever, back to Hungary. During the voyage Ropsley is remorseful. He is in love with Valerie de Rohan, and his love for a good woman has changed him. He confesses the part he has played in Vere's misfortunes. For in addition to reconciling Constance to the marriage with Victor de Rohan, Ropsley has been responsible for persuading Sir Harry that Vere's illegitimacy was a barrier to marriage with Constance.

Ropsley and Vere return to Hungary where the final development of the plot is begun. Constance is worn, sunken into silent suffering, her husband indifferent and even contemptuous toward her and still infatuated with the Princess. Events move more swiftly now. M. Stein forces the Princess to more drastic action, promising complete restitution of her lands and fortunes. She finally works upon Victor to give her a list of all those Hungarian patriots who are plotting against the Austrian government.

But the very next morning a hunting party in the mountains cuts the entangled threads of the plot. By

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

accident Prince Voqsal shoots Victor de Rohan, saving him from disgrace and freeing Constance for eventual reunion with Vere. (The scene is given factitious intensity by the attempt of the aging gypsy queen, who has had a prophetic dream, to reach Victor in time to save him.) At the very end Vere and Constance settle in England; so also Ropsley and Valerie; while the Countess spends the remaining years of her life in repentance, nursing her husband who is now the victim of a stroke caused by the shock of the accident upon a system already weakened by dissipation and excess.

Tied in with this plot are three sets of scenes which are structurally incidental but important to the interest of the narrative. One includes the story of Ali Mesrour who has been separated from his loved one, Zuleika, by force. (Ali's beautiful Arab horse is named after the lost sweetheart.) Later, the lost sweetheart turns up in the harem of Papoosh Pasha in Constantinople. Vere (indebted to Ali for his life in an earlier incident) and Ropsley help Ali in an unsuccessful attempt to rescue Zuleika from the harem--Zuleika meets the fate of unfaithful Moslem mistresses, is drowned, imprisoned alive in a sack, in the river.

Another sequences of scenes concerns the gypsy woman, princess of her tribe, who by dire prophecies tries to forestall the catastrophe which throughout the story threatens Victor de Rohan. Her loyalty to Victor goes back several years to the time when Victor's father gallantly protected the gypsy woman, then a beautiful girl, from the insults of a city mob. The gypsy scenes are part of the romantic setting: wild mountainous Hungarian country, all day hunting parties and long rides sweeping up and down the countryside.

Army life in Constantinople, dinners at Messire's, and campaign hardships, anecdotes from the present and past ("pipeclay" in the jargon of the officers), and scenes from the war itself compose another sequence.

## Section (7) Holmby House. 1860.

Much admired by Whyte-Melville readers in its day,[17] Holmby House is a conventional romance which interweaves with the history of Naseby Field and the execution of Charles I a love story concerning two couples: young Humphrey Bosville, a

Cavalier officer, and Mary Cave, proud and haughty supporter of the Cavalier cause; and Grace Allonby, feminine and soft daughter of a Cavalier house, and Sir George Effingham, gaunt, dark Cavalier who turns Puritan until the sentencing to death of the King brings him to his senses. Action alternates between Holmby House, the family home of Sir Giles Allonby (where Cavaliers gather, messengers and important figures arrive suddenly and disappear as quickly, and where Charles I is kept under custody before he is removed to prison) and other scenes of action (the battlefields, the headquarters of Cromwell, the Court, Parliament, and the scaffold).

Conventional enough in conception and characterization, the novel includes a few scenes of dramatic interest: the opening scene, a run with the Nineteenth Century Pytchley Hunt, much-praised by sporting men of the Nineteenth Century and compared with "Nimrod's" Quarterly Review run; the challenge and duel between young Humphrey and the reckless, dissipated Sir George Goring (Humphrey engages Goring with impartial gallantry when Sir George insults Faith, the Puritan sweetheart of Humphrey's man Hugh); Mary's visit to Cromwell to plead for the life of Humphrey Bosville (in which Cromwell is invested with the gallantry of a Cavalier), Charles I's dignified reception of the Puritan soldiery who come to take him to prison; Sir George Effingham's indignant resignation of his commission to Cromwell. Two battle

scenes (Newbury and Naseby) include some vivid detail and there is a lively chase in which Humphrey Bosville nearly escapes his Roundhead pursuers by a tremendous leap across Northern Water (a setting that has topographical interest, for an editor's footnote explains that the same leap is now part of the Grand Military Steeple Chase).

The story is dominated by Mary Cave, proud, haughty, capable, and beautiful, almost masculine in her accomplishments (a fine sportswoman and skilled in political intrigue), a type repeated later, but only in the historical novels, although there are resemblances between Mary Cave and such heroines of "later" novels as Blanche Douglas (*Satanella*) or Jane Lee (*Black but Comely*) if one omits political activities.

That *Holmby House* is a successful romance is very nearly all that one can say about it, but it is one of the few Whyte-Melville novels which are fully successful within the framework chosen by the author.

Vainly in love with the noble Falkland, Mary Cave withdraws further into her reserve when he is killed in battle and dedicates her considerable energies to his cause. Humphrey Bosville's love for her makes him a willing servant, and she exploits his devotion without compassion.

Grace Allonby is in love with Humphrey--who has eyes only for Mary Cave. Sir George Effingham in turn is in love with Grace, but must renounce all hope when he turns Puritan. Well before the end of the novel, however, the shift which finally resolves the conflict is effected. To save Humphrey, prisoner among the Puritans, Grace visits Sir George Effingham, now a general on the other side. (Mary has already saved Humphrey once by a personal appeal to

Cromwell.) Effingham's evident devotion to her, his noble and melancholy resignation, impresses itself on her mind, and before long his image has supplanted that of the young Cavalier officer.

Mary Cave in turn has found that underneath the frozen surface of her emotions an affection for young Humphrey has been growing. But she must pass through a renunciation and a further period of suffering before her love flowers. Knowing that Grace is in love with Humphrey, that unlike herself, Grace is weak, feminine, and wholly dependent on love, Mary renounces Humphrey. Ironically it is shortly after this that Grace transfers her affection to the loyal Sir George Effingham. Mary must suffer in her renunciation for some time before she discovers this. When she does find that she is free to love Humphrey, the young officer has disappeared. But there is a final meeting, of course, and Mary submits to her lover, a servant who has become her master.

Parallel with the two main love stories is the story of Hugh Dymock, Bosville's loyal man, and his Puritan sweetheart, Faith, whose Presbyterian scruples do not keep her from coy calculations in her efforts to win a husband.

## Section (8) Market Harborough. 1861.

By far the best of Whyte-Melville's novels, Market Harborough is perhaps the least representative in pattern. It is the most restricted in scope, for one thing, and like Kate Coventry and, to a lesser extent, Satanella, it gains by its very limitations. It is the least sprawling in construction and the least dependent upon sheer coincidence or melodramatic action. More than any other of the novels, it works out in full a particular situation. Even in its dramatis personae it is unrepresentative, for the chief character does not come from the fashionable world which supplies most of the central persons of the novels.

The story is simple. Mr. John Sawyer, bachelor master of his own "Grange," on the sunny side of forty, with an honest English face and with a set to his Sunday hat "which denotes indisputable knowledge of horseflesh and a sagacity that almost amounts to dishonesty," is bored with the "Old Country" and decides to have a fling at the "Shires." (His ruminations during the first chapter constitute a brief sketch of the hunting countries of England.) He will turn old Isaac into a stud-groom, buy a couple of nags, and have his fling. The conclusion of his canvassing is--Market Harborough. The book traces his adventures during a season of hunting, culminating in a hubris which leads him to take a turn at steeple-chase riding. The Gods punish him--in convalescence from his fall he becomes an easy victim of the attractions of Miss Cissie Dove, daughter of a "Flying Parson."

But the story is neither one of the exposure to ridicule of the rustic who attempts to keep up with fashionable ways nor one of the unmixed triumph of the shrewd rustic at the expense of the overconfident townsman. It is a skilful blend of the two, if it is described in terms of such patterns. Actually the character of Mr. Sawyer becomes well enough defined to dominate the book and raise the novel out of such a classification. Nor is Mr. Sawyer the only substantial character. The Honorable Crasher, the most languid and imperturbable of Whyte-Melville's dandies, becomes less

and less incredible as incident succeeds incident until the mutual esteem in which Mr. Sawyer and the Honorable hold one another redounds to the credit of both.

The excellence of Market Harborough raises an interesting question, for after this novel (except in the series of sketches Inside the Bar which were added to the fourth edition) Whyte-Melville did not return to the farm in which he had achieved considerable popularity and in which he had developed, relatively at least, artistic maturity. Although Market Harborough is the least representative, its success is due to a pattern anticipated in both Tilbury Nogo and Kate Coventry. In all these the novelist defines the central character clearly and sharply enough for the conception to determine the events of the story. In all these, the structure is simple but effective--an episodic succession of incidents which develop in a straight line but with cumulative revelation of the central characters, one incident leading into another naturally though not always inevitably. In all these, too, the separate incidents are internally developed to a point, however mild the point may be, which contributes to the dominant impression of the whole book. In their way these books are "wholes" as few of the others are. Satanella among the later novels is the chief exception, but even Satanella is not entirely an exception. For though it is more complicated than Market Harborough, when one compares it with the still more elaborate novels (such as

The White Rose among the early ones or Black but Comely among the later ones), one can make the same generalizations about it that have just been made about Market Harborough.

After his decision Mr. Sawyer's first step (chapters ii and iii) is a piece of business with Mr. Job Sloper, nearby horse dealer, and the purchase of a roan whom he names with more imagination than usual Hotspur. Isaac, the crusty, grumbling old groom--who turns out to be a sufficient match later for the dandified Mr. Tiptop--precedes him to Market Harborough to get the lay of the land (chapter iv), and strikes up an immediate acquaintance with Mr. Tiptop, groom to the Honorable Crasher, brother of the "Hearl of Heligoland" and owner among others in his stud of Boadicea by Bellerophon out of Blue Light.

Mr. Sawyer follows next (chapter v) stopping first at the inevitable London outfitters to buy boots. From London he rides to Market Harborough by train. Both at the shop and on the train he meets a languid dandy, the imperturbable Honorable Crasher.

The visitor from the country starts early on the morning after his arrival (chapter vi), gets lost in the mist, and finally comes, once more upon the Honorable Crasher. His new friend confidently calls upon the still diffident Mr. Sawyer to follow him. But whatever his accomplishments in the saddle, the Honorable has no mind for topography, and the two wander considerably off the track before arriving finally at the meet (chapter vii).

The hunt is misted out that day, and instead the Honorable Crasher and Mr. Sawyer accept the invitation of Parson Dove (an enthusiastic and energetic sportsman) to have a biscuit and sherry.

At the Rectory (chapter viii) they have lunch and then look at a four-year-old of whom the Parson is particularly proud, although Mr. Sawyer finds himself paying more attention to the parson's attractive daughter, Cissie, herself a stunning woman. Back in Market Harborough for the evening (chapter ix) Mr. Sawyer meets more of the acquaintances of the season (Savage, Struggles, and Brush), and together they examine the Honorable Crasher's stud of ten beasts--and Mr. Sawyer's of three. "Very useful horses," they all remark of Mr. Sawyer's string, not deceiving him at all. Thus at the end of the first day Mr. Sawyer has met the principals of the season and one principal of his remaining career.

Mr. Sawyer's first hunt the day following (chapters x-xi) is a success. Accompanying the Hon. Crasher, now his close companion, Mr. Sawyer rides Hotspur and keeps up with the best of them until the very end when Hotspur gives out. The presence of Miss Dove adds to the excitement of the chase. Showing the sagacity which has been credited to him earlier, Mr. Sawyer hides the condition of Hotspur, resting his exhausted horse in a barn until the others have returned to town. To his discomfiture he is joined in the barn by another in the same plight, whom Mr. Sawyer takes to be an aristocratic swell. Later, as he walks his horse back to town he is overtaken by Parson Dove and Cissie, and they travel together for a while, Mr. Sawyer becoming even more conscious of her charms, Miss Cissie herself finding out the needed facts about his country house (forty minutes run from London, with land to let and land to keep). They part with expectations of meeting at the ball.

Talk about the steeplechase and the probable entries (chapter xiii) arouses Mr. Sawyer's ambitions and intensifies his determination to buy another horse. But he must sell one to buy one. In the meantime Isaac hints to Mr. Tiptop about the prowess of Marathon, a big lumbering horse which Mr. Sawyer would like to rid himself of; and Mr. Sawyer drops cryptic references to Marathon's performances before the "Committee". These remarks, intended to protect the reputation of Mr. Sawyer's "stud", arouse more interest than Mr. Sawyer and his groom expected, and Isaac tries a venture of his own. Just before dawn one morning (chapter xiv) Isaac and Mr. Tiptop try out the horses of their respective masters: Mr. Sawyer's Marathon--all wrapped up for protection against the dampness of the morning air--and the Honble. Crasher's Chance. Mr. Tiotop lets his master know that Marathon is a good one: Isaac lets Mr. Sawyer in on the secret of the trial, the fact that he used Jack, a smaller and faster horse for a short distance, instead of the supposed Marathon. Although not a party to the deception, Mr. Sawyer is not averse to taking advantage of it, and in the next hunt at Barkby rides Marathon to win. Luck is with him when the fox doubles back to where Mr. Sawyer is waiting and Marathon, fresh after a rest, takes a fence which the others, tired from following all the way, fail at. The result is a very profitable sale to the Honble. Crasher.

In the next hunt (chapter xviii) Mr. Sawyer finds that his grey, Hotspur, fades quickly again. and buys a chestnut from Mr. Varnish, a flashy horse dealer who passes out expensive imported cigars, the "nobleman" whom Mr. Sawyer had encountered in the barn a few nights earlier.

In the next series of incidents Mr. Sawyer is the victim rather than the victor. Mrs. Dove draws out Cissie about Mr. "Sawbridge" and Cissie's information somewhat changes Mrs. Dove's opinion and plans. She manages Mr. Dove skilfully, and Mr. Sawyer shortly receives an invitation to dinner through the mail (chapter xix). The dinner is a success; Cissie fixes Mr. Sawyer; Mrs. Bel Merrywether flirts with Major Brush (too old a hand at such encounters to suffer from the attack), Parson Dove and Captain Struggles talk hunting, Mr. Savage obediently listens to Mrs. Dove, and the languid Honble. Crasher relaxes comfortably. (The match-making mothers have long since given him up.)

The party continues after dinner, but Mr. Sawyer's mind is definitely not on the cards. Talk of the coming steeple chase engages the attention of most, and Mr. Sawyer gallantly chooses Cissie's favorite colors and Cissie generously assents. On the way home the Honble. Crasher--whose recklessness once he is in the saddle equals his ennui out of it--comes to grief with the phaeton at a fence. Mr. Trotter the farmer, comes to their rescue with shelter for the night, and they continue on their way to town--still in evening clothes--the next morning, nearly spotted by the Doves, father and daughter, who are on their way to the day's meet.

Mr. Sawyer is now hard hit. His change in wardrobe and manner (at every hunt now he is in the forefront nearly running down the hounds to the disgust and annoyance of M.O.H.) is enough to give him away. So evident is his state of mind, that Miss Dove is overconfident in her coquetry with others at the ball, and to her discomfiture (but not to her final defeat) Mr. Sawyer withdraws early to the room of the Honble. Crasher who had forgotten all about the dance he had promised Lady Barbara.

Mr. Sawyer's carrying of Cissie's colors in the steeple chase indirectly does him in. The steeplechase is won by a newcomer who rides Mr. Savage's horse and beats out the Honble. Crasher. Mr. Sawyer is far behind, suffering a fall and a broken collar bone. But the broken collar bone becomes his entree into the Dove parsonage and to an opportunity for further attentions to Cissie and her reciprocal sympathy.

In the final chapter some time later, Savage and the narrator watch the sale of Mr. Sawyer's horses at Tattersall's. Later at Sam's Library, they meet Mr. Sawyer himself, carried in tow by Mrs. Sawyer nee Dove, who has evidently been supervising Mr. Sawyer's retirement from hunting. But an examination of the books which Mr. Sawyer has been perusing (Mrs. Sawyer herself has been looking at a plan of the opera) shows him still unregenerate.

## Section (9) Inside the Bar

Added to Market Harborough in the fourth edition, Inside the Bar is very nearly equal in quality, although for some reason it is not mentioned by any of the critics who discuss Whyte-Melville and is omitted from the Cambridge Bibliography. As a type it belongs with Surtees' Analysis of the Hunting Field and Trollope's Hunting Sketches,[18] being a series of "characters" of the different types of men and women to be found at a hunt. Although not as vigorous as Surtees' series of sketches, it is superior to it in dramatic continuity and equal to it in vividness of characterization, and it is superior creatively to Trollope's set of sketches which are analytical and humorous but drawn, the reader feels, at a considerable distance from the subject.[19]

Mr. Cyrus Softly, the narrator of Inside the Bar is a sportsman laid up at the inn at Soakington with a broken collar bone. From his vantage point inside the bar of the Haycock, he can observe several of the local characters, of whom he writes sketches: Miss Caroline Lushington, the barmaid and genius loci; Mr. Tips, the horse-breaker, an ex-chimney sweep; Mr. Dick Naggett, the sporting butcher of the adjacent town; Mr. Turnbull of Apple-Tree farm, a specimen of the British yeoman; Old Ike, the earth-stopper; Miss Merlin, the intrepid horsewoman with the Byronic past, her dapper groom John and French maid Justine; Mr. James Plumtree of the Ashes ("Jovial Jem"), the spoiled son of a country

# [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

squire whom Eton and Oxford have turned into a flashy sport; the old-fashioned Squire, his father, whom Cyrus Softly visits (and the two daughters with varied accomplishments, Rebecca and Jane).

What little plot there is centers around Cyrus Softly's interest in the exciting Miss Merlin. He meets and talks with her groom, with her French maid, with others who have met her. He writes to a friend in London who knows everyone and gets an account of her past--a disappointment in love and a career of aloof, determined, and reckless hunting since. But he continually misses meeting her face to face, catching glimpses of her only as she vanishes into a carriage outside the inn door, or up the stairs at the Haycock. Finally, fully recovered, Softly rides in the Soakington Field Day Hunt, in which he fully expects to see the fascinating horsewoman close at hand. But like other unfortunates in Whyte-Melville's novels (Tilbury Nogo, for example), he gets cut off by fences and follows the hunt from afar. "Distinct against the sky stood out Miss Merlin's graceful figure, leaning forward to caress the redoutable Lady-killer, who had carried her so well. In close attendance I made out the white hunter of the exquisite Pep /Pepham Algernon Adelphus Evergreen, a double-distilled dandy from Castle-Cropper/." The hunt is over and the kill is made, and still from the distance Softly sees Miss Merlin and her attendant cavaliers taking the direct road for the

castle. Softly returns to the inn. "Arrived there, I found the dapper groom in marching order, getting out his horses for a journey. He had received orders that morning to move them on to Melton; and I have never set eyes on Miss Merlin from that day to this."

Light as the accomplishment is, it is the best example of deft handling of suspense, dramatic irony, and economy of conclusion--if one excepts the ending of Market Harborough--in Whyte-Melville's writing.

## Section (10) Good for Nothing. 1861.

Good for Nothing,[20] published in the same year as Market Harborough, is the second of a series of three closely related novels: General Bounce, Good for Nothing itself, and The White Rose. Development in maturity and complexity is evident in the series, but Whyte-Melville never attained mastery of this subject and of a technique of dealing with it as he did in the series including Tilbury Nogo, Kate Coventry, and Market Harborough. Unfortunately it was The White Rose and its predecessors rather than Market Harborough which provided the base for the "later" novels. Without external evidence, it is difficult to determine what exactly influenced Whyte-Melville to abandon the method and scope of the more successful early novels. It may be that Whyte-Melville did not recognize the superiority of Kate Coventry and Market Harborough, for they are superior by modern standards of

objectivity and craftsmanship, organically "wholes," standards which were not worked out during the period when Whyte-Melville wrote. His admiration for Thackeray is sufficient evidence for this. Also, the method of Market Harborough limits the scope of the author, and it is a credible supposition that the writer was ambitious to attempt a broader range than such a method would permit him. Very likely, too, is the supposition that Whyte-Melville considered Kate Coventry and Market Harborough light works. For they are essentially comic in conception, and Whyte-Melville's works give evidence of considerable seriousness of intent, a desire to deal with values implicit in the way of life which he admired and to probe beneath the surface of his characters. Public demand in his time would have reenforced such a tendency.

Good for Nothing repeats the basic situation of General Bounce, elaborating the scheme and attempting to supply something more than the sheerly accidental catastrophe which ended in the death of Charles and in Mary's life-long trial of suffering. It is in fact a re-writing of General Bounce, and although it is intrinsically meritless from the point of view of the reader several generations later, it provides an interesting study in revision. Gilbert Orme and Lady Gertrude, cousins, correspond to Charles and Blanche, both in character and in the fact that they are supposed by most of the others in the story to be in love with one another and to become husband and wife. Ada Latimer

corresponds to Mary Delaval: like her she has had to make her way in the world, is a music mistress, finds continued support and strength in a firm reliance on her Creator, inculcates such beliefs explicitly when she has opportunity, is in love with Gilbert (-Charles), and at the end of the story after the death of Gilbert, must face a life-time of patient suffering. John Gordon corresponds to Frank Hardingstone: he is a gentleman but not a dandy, industrious, serious, proud, devoted to Lady Gertrude at a distance. The narrator who occasionally speaks in the first person is an old family friend and corresponds to the General although taking a less active part in the plot. Like Charles, Gilbert leaves England for adventure abroad (in Australia rather than Africa) and like Charles, he recuperates from illness at a country estate, surrounded by friends, particularly by Gertrude (-Blanche), John (-Frank), and the narrator (-the General). In this the story is varied by the exclusion of Ada (-Mary) from the family circle.

But Good for Nothing differs in significant ways, and a definite growth in maturity and complexity of intention (if not of accomplishment) is evident. The most noticeable growth is the conscientious attempt to make character determine the situation (or at least to provide characterization which justifies the situation). Despite the nobility of his nature, Gilbert is ill-prepared for catastrophe and trial by the ease and pleasure of his life. The cold indifference,

at times almost hatred, which his mother displays toward him has sown the seeds of bitterness, disillusionment, and distrust of people in his character. So he is impatient and rebellious at Ada's religious convictions, easily embittered by her scruples and distrustful of the resignation with which she decides to return to her husband. He is incapable of any response to disappointment other than reckless dissipation, and while recuperating from the fever lacks the hope in life which would give him a will to live. (He is one of the few characters in Whyte-Melville's with a tendency toward an articulate philosophy, although this is less part of his nature than a result of his long illness.) John Gordon too is a more sharpened and complex character than Frank Hardingstone. Frank's industrious seriousness was unexplained; John's is motivated by the fact that although of gentle birth he must make his own way if he is to take a place in society commensurate with the position of the woman he loves. His determination and decisiveness is the outgrowth of years of application, and his proud sensitiveness to Lady Gertrude's apparent lightness of heart is further increased by an awareness of the irony in the sacrifices that he has been making to win a woman apparently certain to become the wife of another. Neither Ada Latimer nor Lady Gertrude, however, are explained with such conscientiousness. It is not until the "later" novels that one finds similar background detail for the woman of the novels. Presumably

Ada Latimer so accurately represented what a part of the reading public would accept as a believable type that the necessity of explanation did not occur to the author.

Besides attempting to sharpen, complicate, and motivate the characters of the four principals of the story, Whyte-Melville broadens the scope of the novel by adding a much more elaborate set of secondary characters, representing more levels of society and more varied types of human problem, as a background for the main story, and, presumably, to give the main story further meaningfulness by comparison and contrast. Again, Thackeray, whom Whyte-Melville clearly follows in the society novels, provides sufficient precedent. In Good for Nothing, for instance, middle class life is introduced in Alderman Jones, John Gordon's partner in trade, and his daughter Bella, whom the generous, simple, kindly Lord Holyhead marries before the scene is over.

Another difference between Good for Nothing and its predecessor lies in a harder and more bitter social satire. In General Bounce the satire was light-hearted and tended toward comedy. The entourage of dandies surrounding Blanche was amusing on the whole although more serious themes were introduced in the Byronism of D'Orville and the mean calculations of Lord Mt. Helicon and Sir Ascot Uppercrust, who remain comic nevertheless. In Good for Nothing there is a hollow echo of folly about the dandies, except for Gilbert

himself, who preserves a kind of natural innocence throughout his career, and for Lord Holyhead. (Even in his headlong pursuit of dissipation Gilbert is English enough to be a reckless sportsman during the day, and during the nights of drinking he remains sexually decent.) Amiable Charley Wing, the last of the Whyte-Melvillean dandies who hark back to the Regency days and tell stale stories of the Prince and "poor D'Orsay," comes into an inheritance and becomes a mean tight-fisted property-owner; the "evergreen" Flippant continues as a dandy, more or less tolerated (like Tilbury Nogo) by the new generation at the clubs on St. James Street; Landless ends his pursuit of property with "possession of the six-foot plot." Nor are the fashionable women more pleasant: Lady Olivia is cruelly cold and unfeeling; Lady Visigoth's tyrannies over those seeking entrance into society are at the least unamiable; Mme. Bravoura the Italian singer is a sallow, shrewish termagant. Only Mrs. Montpellier, twice-widowed, is genuinely amiable, and she is suspect among the social elite. (In a concession to a rosier view, Whyte-Melville permits Mrs. Montpellier to triumph over Lady Visigoth at the end of the book.) In all this there is a return to the tone of Digby Grand.

In structure the book follows the march of the seasons, opening with the London season in full swing, continuing after an interim during which Gilbert and John are in Australia, with the succeeding London season, ending with

the country season as background for the final events. Upon this natural order Whyte-Melville attempts to superimpose at points a more elaborate one, apparently as an after-thought. His explanation of the conduct of Lady Olivia is an example. Gilbert's father was driven to drink and madness by the inhuman coldness of his wife, the Lady Olivia. Towards the very end of the novel, Whyte-Melville partly explains her conduct by the fact that she rushed into a hasty and ill-advised marriage after being slighted in love. The man whom she loved and lost, the author adds suddenly, is the very same Captain Glyn who was Ada Latimer's impecunious father.

The first chapters of the book are set in West End London during the "season." Gilbert Orme is a young man of money and property whose life is a continuous succession of pleasures, the customary round of the town dandy, although an innocence of character preserves him from the most hardening and undermining effects of his idle existence. His name is linked with that of his cousin, the Lady Gertrude, a determined, somewhat proud young woman. His mother, the Lady Olivia, with whom Gertrude lives, is cold and unfeeling towards her son and has been so since he can remember. He in turn is bitter towards her.

Other central characters from the beginning of the story include John Gordon, who is a foil to Gilbert in character. A man of good birth but without adequate substance to give him the place in society which he wants, he enters business with the determination to build his fortune. Cool, hard-working, he hides underneath his outward calm a devotion to Gilbert's cousin, Gertrude, a devotion which is his main motive for industry. His partner in business is Alderman Jones, whose daughter Isabella is in love first with John Gordon himself, later with the generous and considerate Lord Holyhead. Lord Holyhead finds other occupations to amuse himself, including theatre management, being occupied at the beginning of the story with Mme. Bravoura, the Italian singer.

At a morning concert Gilbert sees and hears (and soon comes to love) Ada Latimer, "the sweetest voice in London," who sings and teaches music for a living. Ada's husband, a reckless unprincipled gambler, has deserted her and escaped to Australia. Ada has been pushed into her marriage by her widowed mother who was anxious to see her daughter settled and provided for, doubly so because she herself had been left penniless at the death of Captain Glyn although their marriage had been a happy one. Since her husband's departure Ada has heard news of his death.

Gilbert meets Ada at the home of Alderman Jones, John Gordon's partner. (Ada teaches Bella Jones music.) Gilbert pursues his acquaintance and is soon in love. But Ada learns that Gilbert, it is generally supposed, is to marry the Lady Gertrude, and avoids the meetings which had become the center of Gilbert's existence. Desperate and moody, Gilbert makes a confidante of Mrs. Montpellier, amiable, attractive, twice-widowed, not entirely accepted by society (at least not by Lady Visigoth near whom, in Mayfair, Mrs. Montpellier has settled). Her observation that of course he can't marry a music mistress fires Gilbert to propose. He seeks out Ada, makes his love known, and finds that he is loved in turn.

In the meanwhile business adversities have forced John Gordon to leave for Australia to look after special interests. His departure leaves the proud Gertrude in tears, and she finds that her heart belongs not to her cousin but to the industrious business man. Gilbert Orme follows John to Australia, for Ada--who is not without self-righteousness--insists upon a year's test before they marry. Through suffering and submission to God she has become certain of herself, but she fears that Gilbert needs strengthening of character after a life of idle pleasure if they are to be certain of happiness in marriage.

In the Australian bush John Gordon and Gilbert Orme (Gilbert is now bearded and bronzed, Gordon still impeccable and clean-shaven) meet an English adventurer whose references to his past life and to "Ada" betray him to Gilbert as his loved one's supposedly dead husband. (Latimer had had a notice of his own death inserted in the papers in order to escape his debts.) Gilbert resists an opportunity to murder Latimer, but turns morose and silent. In London Ada receives a letter from Latimer announcing that he is to return and telling of his meeting with Gilbert Orme whom he has recognized as the young dandy he used to see at the race tracks. He knows nothing of

the relationship between Gilbert and Ada.

When Gilbert returns to London, Ada, resigned and determined, resists temptation and tells Gilbert that they must never meet. Gilbert interprets her calm as lack of feeling, leaves her with bitter words, and plunges into a reckless career of frenzied activity during the day, drinking and dissipation at night, heedless of Ada's words about resignation to God and of the counsels of his old tutor, the narrator of the story. Weakened by desperation and dissipation, he falls a victim to brain fever, through which he barely comes. (The moment of crisis coincides with a visit from Ada who has heard of his illness and who fears that she may not see him again alive.)

Recovered from his illness, Gilbert is still bitter and cynical, finding comfort and peace only in the company of his cousin Gertrude, and in talk with the narrator of the story. During one conversation he speaks bitterly of Ada, and the narrator tells in her defense of her visit when Gilbert lay sick. With an exclamation, "My God, she loves me yet," Gilbert rushes to his room. The next morning he is discovered dead, under his arm a note from Ada saying that the path of duty sends her to Australia to seek her husband, near his arm a half empty bottle of laudanum. After the burial the narrator of the story comes upon Ada at the grave, harrowed by fear that her note drove Gilbert to his death. She is given some hope, however. Once since her visit to the sick room she had seen Gilbert: walking near the town to which she had retired to make it impossible for Gilbert to find her, she saw Gilbert, pale and mournful, cross her path. As the town clock struck the half hour after nine Gilbert looked at her and was gone before she could call him back. His feet left no mark. Now, from the narrator of the story, she finds that it was on that very night that Gilbert died, and his watch, picked up from the floor, had stopped at half past nine.

In the meanwhile the course of other loves has run more happily. When Jones finally fails and has to sell all he has, Bella matures from a pleasant girl into a capable woman. Lord Holyhead, already attracted, proposes to her. John and Gertrude do not arrive at their confession of love so simply. John interprets Gilbert's fondness for Gertrude's company as further evidence that the two cousins love one another. Fortunately Gertrude passes a door just in time to see John raise to his lips some sewing upon which she has been working. She enters the room with her own mind made up, and her encouragement is all that is needed to bring about a declaration.

One final incident closes the book. The narrator has already given an account of Latimer's further degradation in Australia, without explaining how such information came into his possession. Now, two years after Gilbert's death he meets Ada Latimer as he leaves an evening church service. Ada has come to him for reassurance that it is all right for her to stay in England: she has searched for her husband in Australia without finding a trace of him.

"Surely there is no harm in my staying here," she tells the narrator of the story.

> "Indeed I have but one wish, to labour whilst I live, and do all the good that one weak woman can. Night and morning I pray but to know what is required of me. Oh! I want to be so good--so good. It may be" --and her voice sank to a whisper, whilst a shudder swept over her frame--"it may be that his blood is on my head. Shall I have to seek him through all eternity without finding him! Oh! no, no. I believe the Scriptures, and they promise me that 'the fervent paryer of the righteous availeth much'!"
>
> Trusting even beyond the grave. Hoping, when even hope itself had failed. Ah! could he but have thought as you did, Ada, my boy had been still alive. You would never have met on earth, but to Infinite Mercy you would cheerfully have confided your lot hereafter. Alas for the one who failed at the moment of trial, in his faith! Alas for the proud self-confidence, the reckless spirit, and undisciplined heart! I dare not speculate on its doom, nor argue the award of unimpeachable justice; nor place a limit to the ransom which has rescued millions on millions of souls for all eternity.
>
> Could I tell Ada Latimer she must leave that hope alone for ever?

/The End/

## Section (11) The Queen's Maries.[21] 1862.

In the Queen's Maries Whyte-Melville returns to the Cavalier theme. Duller than Holmby House--there is less action and movement--the book covers the period from

the return of Mary from France to Scotland until her marriage with young Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley. Plots and counterplots are woven in with a fictional story of the loves of the four Maries, maids-in-waiting on the Queen. Historical figures, particularly Bothwell, John Knox, and James the brother of Mary, play an active part.

Central figure in the romantic episodes in the young Scot Walter Maxwell who has served the Queen in France and whose strong arm and loyal heart commend him both to the Queen and to Bothwell his distant kinsman. He loves the proud Mary Carmichael and is loved in turn. But her nocturnal meetings in the garden with a strange man for whom she confesses love injures his feelings (somewhat justly, and not until the end of the novel does he discover that the man is Mary's father, engaged in secret missions such that Mary could not reveal his identity.

Saucy Mary Seton favors rough handsome borderer Dick o' the Cleugh, who dies helping Maxwell to escape from prison, whose death causes Mary Seton the few tears she sheds during the story. Haughty Mary Beton snubs the honest guardsman Alexander Ogilvy for the attentions of Lord Randolph, the English ambassador, only to find that she has been made a tool to his purpose, not too late, however, to surrender her pride to the man who does love her. Sad Mary Hamilton loves Chastelar the minstrel,

victim of a consuming passion for his Queen and executed finally for a rash act upon her person. Mary Hamilton finally enters a convent, but dies of heart-break before she can take her vows.

Much of the book centers on the Queen herself, who is pictured as a thoroughly feminine woman, victim of history and of her own fatal fascination the power of which for good and evil she does not comprehend. Most of the scenes in which she appears are decorative tableaux and the author fails to reveal much beyond the basic and simple interpretation. For its interest the novel depends upon a succession of great figures walking on to the stage: the turbulent Bothwell, the foreign Riccio, the severe John Knox, the crafty Lord Moray. A few scenes belonging to the romantic companion plot are vivid, particularly the street fight between the Hepburns and the Hamiltons which ensues after Bothwell and his companions have broken into the apartment of the not unwilling Mistress Allison in town, who expects another guest, the Earl of Arran; the visit of John Knox to the palace, his skirmish with Mary and his rebuke to the maids-in-waiting, and Knox's interview with Bothwell; the lonely vigil of Mary Hamilton on the morning Chastelar is executed, in the company of the poor, cold, whimpering court fool James Beddes.

## Section (12) The Gladiators, 1863.

The Gladiators, much praised during its own century, is a heavy historical novel concerned in the first part with the fall of the emperor Vitellius and the rise of Vespasius, and in the second part with the fall of Jerusalem before the Roman legionary. In the first the scenes of action center on the arena, in the second on the battlefield. By one of his frequent mass coincidences, the author manages to transport the same cast of characters, female as well as male, to the new setting. (This formula, partly worked out in The Interpreter where most of the characters meet first in England and then later in Vienna, is developed fully in Cerise in which the same transportation is managed from Paris to the West Indies and then to England.)

Despite frequent lapses into banality and despite a theatrical over-simplification of characters, The Gladiators is by no means a failure even for the modern reader who may be interested in this kind of novel. Dependent upon pageantry, the novel moves slowly but with a massive effectiveness, particularly in the scenes at the Arena, and occasionally with vigor, particularly in the scenes of the fall of Jerusalem. It is difficult to place a very high estimate upon the book, however, though it is still popular enough to exist in an Everyman's Library edition and in an abridged edition (presumably for

children) published by the Oxford University Press. One student of the historical novel gives it an important place in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century fiction, placing it among the twelve novels "of permanent value," among the "absolute best" of novels of Roman life" in a list of such novels brought up to the year 1923.[22] Of The Gladiators the critic says that in the development of novels of Roman life Whyte-Melville is "the first of the brilliant sensational writers of the 'gorgeous romance' of Roman life in English."[23]

Esca, the slave, is of royal Anglo-Saxon blood, his mother the lovely Guenebra, now dead, his father the same Roman general, Caius L. Lucinius whose slave he now is (their relationship is not revealed, of course, until the very end of the novel). Lucinius is the stoic, virtuous Roman, honest, diligent, temperate; but his heart has been cold and his life empty since he found his Anglo-Saxon wife dead on his return to England after an absence of two years. Esca attracts the attention of two people particularly. One is the rich, haughty, passionate, and licentious Valeria, who is loved by the cruel handsome tribune Julius Placidus, favorite of Vitellius and later of Vespasius as well. The other is the fencing master Hippias, trainer of the elite company of gladiators, the "Invincibles," and instructor in the houses of the best families. (He teaches the Amazonian Valeria fencing.) Hippias admires Esca and trains him in the use of the different weapons. The fencing master himself is in love with Valeria but must worship from afar and cannot press his suit upon such a noble lady.

Early in the story Esca meets three others who are central figures: Miramne, the beautiful dark Jewish girl; the proud and warlike zealot Eleazar, her ather, in Rome on a mission for his race now oppressed by the Romans; and the peaceful Clachas, his brother and Miramne's uncle, a Christian. Esca rescues Miramne from molestation by a procession of worshippers of Isis lead by the eunuch Spado and followed, among others, by the

noblewoman Valeria. Other minor characters in the first part of the book include Mirrhina, Valeria's coquettish servant (not far different from the Justines and Rosines who wait upon their English mistresses in other novels by Whyte-Melville); Hirpinus, the aging gladiator; Damasippus and Oarses, freedmen and obsequious clients of Placidus; and Echenor, the Greek boxer, beautiful but cowardly.

The first change in the fortunes of Esca comes with a dispute between Placidus and Licinious during a banquet at the Emperor's palace over Esca's accomplishments. The upshot is a match between the slave and Placidus himself, who is proud of his skill with the next and trident. In the arena before the gathered aristocrats and people, Placidus wins--though it is an accident which gives him his advantage. Sparing Esca when the spectators give the sign, Placidus takes the Saxon home with him as his slave in fulfillment of one of the conditions of the wager. He already suspects that the slave has succeeded with Valeria where he has failed, although he does not know of the scene in which Valeria despite her elaborate preparations has failed to seduce Esca.

Placidus is behind a plot to overthrow Vitellius and place Vespasius on the throne. With him are the mercenary "Invincibles" under Hippias. Esca by accident overhears enough of the plot to be dangerous and Placidus determines to be rid of him. At this point the plot moves swiftly into a maze of complications (somewhat more tightly woven and skilfully handled than usual with Whyte-Melville, though not free from a number of forced coincidences). Esca's attempt to rescue Miramne, who has been abducted for the pleasure of Placidus, and his effort to warn the Emperor; Valeria's efforts to prevent Placidus from poisoning Esca and her plan to win Esca's gratitude; and Placidus' efforts to destroy Esca before he can forewarn the emperor are all intertwined with the revolt and end in a dramatic scene as the emperor's palace falls. Esca and Miramne escape together. Valeria has lost both Placidus and Esca: she has betrayed her duplicity to Placidus when nearly successful in poisoning Placidus in an exchange-of-the-poisoned-cup scene; Esca she has given up by a sudden generous gesture, to Miramne.

After the fall of Vitellius the scene changes to the siege of Jerusalem, just before the fall of the city. Nearly all the dramatis personae are there. Licinius and Placidus are outside the city commanding legions; Hippias commands the "Invincibles," now mercenary troops set on

looting the temple. Valeria in desperate self-contempt has surrendered herself to Hippias, and even now lives with him in his tent, going out only when clad in armor, her statuesque Amazonian figure passing as that of a man.[24] (Their relationship is strained and bitter now, she once more haughty and contemptuous, he resentful.) Inside the city Eleazar leads one of the three Jewish parties and is determined to fight to the last. Calchas and Miriamne are there, and Esca (who is soon recognized by those outside the city, during a foray) is accepted as a member of the family.

Once more the author intertwines a complicated set of incidents with the violence of the fall of Jerusalem. Calchas by a secret underground passageway has treated with the enemy on a mission for Eleazar who is temporizing while further fortifications are built. (While in the enemy camp, Calchas talks with Licinius who is moved by Calchas's exposition of the Christian philosophy; Calchas's remarks about Esca also reveal to Licinius that the Saxon slave is his own son.) But Calchas's mission becomes known to the Jews, and Calchas is tried by the Sanhedrin for treason. In order to fulfil his duties, Eleazar must disclaim and deny his brother before the Court, but Esca confesses himself a Christian and is condemned to be stoned to death with Calchas. Later Miriamne, too, in order to be with Esca in death confesses the faith, after a journey of her own through the underground passage to seek help for the condemned Esca from his Roman friends and after an interview with the militant Valeria.

At sunrise the next morning the stoning of the prisoners has already begun, and Calchas has already been mortally injured when the trumpets announce the attack and the execution is delayed. The attack is successful (Miriamne had unwittingly revealed the existence of the underground passage). When it is over and smoke curls around the beams of the Temple, Calchas, Eleazar, Placidus, Hippias, and Valeria all are dead, and Esca and Miriamne are safe under the protection of Licinius.

## Section (13) Cerise. 1868.

In structure, The Interpreters, The Gladiators, Cerise, and Sarchedon form a sequence of development which

is completed in Cerise and continued in Sarchedon. (The three later historical novels, (Katerfelto, Rosine and Sister Louise return to the somewhat simpler structures of the first two historical novels, Holmby House and The Queen's Maries.) Instead of the double division of The Gladiators, there is in Cerise a triple division as the scene shifts from Paris to the West Indies and then to England. Nearly all the entire cast of characters is shifted to each succeeding locale.[25]

As a Nineteenth Century Anthony Adverse type of novel Cerise must be granted a sufficiency of varied action and romantic schemes to satisfy the most demanding of lending library readers as the fact that it went through a series of reprintings[26] testifies. Compared in tempo, structure, and variety with The Interpreters (which though not strictly historical in the same sense is the first of the adventure novels), it represents a considerable gain in technique. That it achieves its effect of speed and variety of excitement is both all that can be said and enough to be said.[27]

George Hamilton, captain of the Grey Musketeers, is an Englishman, a member of a family which has ever thrown itself into the cause of the exiled Stuarts. As a boy he had played with Cerise (the name is a childhood corruption of her real name, Therese) de Montmorail, and an attachment had begun which continues even yet, although Cerise has been away at a convent for several years. There her confessor, Brother Ambrose (formerly the handsome Florian de St. Croix), has fallen in love with her, a step fatal to his purpose--to win influence over her so that her wealth

may go to the church. Her mother, widow of a prince-marshal, cold, beautiful, and proud, has attracted the attention of the Duke of Orleans. Mme. de Montmorail's cousin, the unscrupulous and ambitious Abbe Malletort, already foresees a possibility that his cousin may become Queen of France: for the old King is dying, and the Duke, whose Duchess is ailing and will probably not live many more months, will become regent.

At a royal hunting party, Mme. Montmorail's runaway horse is stopped by the handsome Capt. George with whom she falls in love. Shortly after this she unwittingly guarantees the frustration of her passion by bringing her daughter Cerise back from the convent to start her worldly life. Captain George sees her and finds his childhood affection for the daughter grown into a man's love.

Several preliminary incidents lead the way to the scene which ends the first book. Eugene Beaudesir, pale, almost clerical in appearance, kills in a duel, the fencing master of the Musketeers, Flanconnade, the most dangerous swordsman in Paris. Beaudesir is brought to Captain George who enrolls him in the Guard. Another new character is also introduced. Sefano Bartoletti, necromancer, alchemist, and poisoner, is reunited with his wife, Celandine, quadroon servant from Mme. de Montmorail's West Indian estate, when the two are engaged by the Abbe Malletort to aid in a necromantic raising of Satan for the edification of the superstitious Duke of Orleans.

Abbe Malletort is busy with his plans. From Bartoletti he procures a poisoned bouquet of rare flowers, the flowers affected by Mme. de Sabran, one of the Duke's favorites, so poisoned that they will turn her beautiful complexion, her great attraction, brown. He persuades Mme. de Montmorail to carry them to the ball. The plot nearly succeeds: Mme. de Sabran, envious of the flowers, craves a sprig, and is about to inhale their poisoned fragrance when Captain George--who by accident knows they are poisoned--dashes them in an apparently clumsy gesture from her hand. His action only increases Mmme. de Montmorail's passion for him.

Abbe Malletort now encourages the Duke so that the Regent arranges a clandestine visit to Mme. de Montmorail's apartments, unknown to her. She responds to his advances with indignant contempt. Captain George, who strolls near the Hotel Montmorail each evening hoping for a glimpse of Cerise, interferes. When the Regent calls the guard, Captain George has to fight for his life, Beaudesir at his side; he escapes.

Some time later in a seaport town (as the second book begins) Capt. George runs into Beaudesir who is in hiding, maintaining himself as a dancing master. Beaudesir ships with his former comrade, who is now skipper of a privateer. An incident at the beginning of the voyage, in which the Captain distinguishes himself for coolness and Beaudesir wins the admiration of the crew for saving a man overboard, introduces a new character, the very nautical Slapjack.

The privateer puts in at Port Welcome in the West Indies where Mme. de Montmorail's estate is situated. Out of favor with the Regent, she has retired there with Cerise and with Bartoletti, now a cruel overseer of Mme. de. Montmorail's slaves. Celandine is also on the island, living outside the estate in a strategic place from which to watch for uprisings among the negroes. The negroes, led by the black Hippolyte, hold Celandine in awe as a witch-woman. A revolt is clearly threatened. Before it breaks out, Cerise wins a devoted and needed friend among the slaves when she stops a flogging of the beautiful negress, Fleurette. Celandine, too, makes an important discovery; by a mark on his neck she identifies the rough sailor Slap-jack as the long lost son whom she and her husband Bartoletti have been seeking.

An uprising against the white women who own the plantation (told in elaborate detail) nearly succeeds but for the arrival at the critical moment of Captain George from the vessel lying in the harbor. (Celandine has been party to the plans and has sent her new-found son Slap-jack to summon help.) All make their escape over the mountain led by the devoted (now wounded and expiring) Fleurette. Mme. de Montmorail has seen during the rescue that Captain George is in love with Cerise, not with her. Understanding that she herself has no chance, she insists that Captain George and Cerise be married immediately before sailing. Beaudesir promises to find a priest among the Jesuits on the island, and when the wedding party appears at the chapel, the waiting priest turns out to be Beaudesir himself: Florian de Croix, Brother Ambrose, and the adventurous swordsman Beaudesir are one and the same person.

With Captain George's succession to family estates in England (at the beginning of the third book), his career of adventure ends. Cerise is not entirely happy as the wife of an English country gentleman. Papist and foreigner as she is, she is not fully accepted by the English wives, and her husband spends much of his time in English activities which take him away from her.

The Abbe Malletort, too, is in England, at an Inn not far from the Hamilton estate, still busy with schemes, particularly a Jacobite uprising to overthrow the House of Hanover. Brother Ambrose (Florian de Croix, Eugene Beaudesir) is a visitor with the Hamiltons. He has returned to the Jesuits, and his present assignment--which causes a considerable conflict of conscience--is to influence George through Cerise, to throw his energies and powers of leadership in with the Jacobites. Captain George, despite his Jacobite sympathies, holds aloof.

Other characters in this phase of the story are Slap-Jack, now a domestic at the Hamilton estate; Slap-Jack's sweetheart, Alice, at the Inn; Captain Bold, and adventurer and cutthroat who is working with Malletort; Sir Marmaduke, a country squire and justice of the peace. Mme. de Montmorail, now in Paris after the death of the Regent, corresponds with Cerise, giving her sage advice about the management of her husband.

The presence of Brother Ambrose complicates domestic relations between George and Cerise. Florian's continual attentions to Cerise and in turn her apparent solicitousness for him, make George cold and aloof. Their mutual pride forbids asking for or giving explanations. (This estrangement is resolved finally by the series of incidents which end the Jacobite plot.)

The plot becomes known to the authorities when Alice overhears enough at the Inn to go to Sir Marmaduke. Mme. de Montmorail on her way to visit Cerise finds that the plot is known in London. (Mme. de. Montmorail is in England to sell her French estates and to see whether she can smooth matters between her daughter and son-in-law. It is from a youthful admirer, Casimir de Chateau-Guerrard, nephew of the old officer who himself had admired her, that she finds out about the plot.) Mme. de Montmorail is saved from a jeering mob that resents her foreign airs and accent, by Smoke-Jack, another of George's former seamen, who accompanies her to the Hamilton estate and who helps to expose the character of Captain Bold.

The Abbe prepares his retreat, but before he leaves he must get back a list of names which Brother Ambrose has left indiscreetly in the hands of Captain George. Malletort assigns Captain Bold to hold up the coach which is to take George and Florian to London where George will help Florian to get out of the country. In the encounter by quick action takes the bullet intended for George and dies to save his life; George kills Captain Bold; and the

Abbe, galloping away to make his escape, is killed by a fall into a ravine. Cerise thinks it is her husband who has been killed, and her grief reveals to him that his suspicions have been unjustified.

### Section (14) The Brookes of Bridlemere. 1864.

In type The Brookes of Bridlemere is a society novel and in range and scope belongs with the series including particularly General Bounce, Good for Nothing, and The White Rose. But in several ways it differs clearly from these and stands alone among the early novels. It follows a larger number of characters through a plot which is more elaborately patterned. (The two preceding books have been carefully plotted historical novels. Now the writer transfers his newly developed technique to the story of contemporary life, but with less success.) Also it deals with a greater number of social levels (not only with fashionable but not-quite-great, but with the great aristocrats above them and with the middle and lower classes below them).[28] This distribution of attention is uneven and the point of view from which these different levels are seen is limited, so that the book by no means achieves representativeness. But the tendency is clearly there. Finally the theme of melancholy ruin of character or fortune which dominated Digby Grand, General Bounce, The Interpreter, and Good for Nothing, and to which the author returns in The White Rose is subordinated, and attention is focused upon the scenes which Whyte-Melville handles

best: the barracks life of young army officers, fashionable hunts at country estates (a "squire's," a "lord's," and a "duke's"); life in a midland town colored by the presence of young officers quarters nearby; the race course and military handicap; and, later, London West End during the season and, especially, the daily parades of the fashionable on Rotten Row.

The story itself concerns chiefly the affairs of the Brookes. Squire Brooke, aging, confined to the house, irascible, neglectful of his estate. Helen Brooke, a conventional heroine, good, beautiful, brave, who tends her father, visits the poor, and loves Philip Stoney, younger of the two brothers in trade together. Jack Brooke, steady, diffident, somewhat halting in society, but capable and manly, concerned with keeping Bridlemere up despite the inefficiencies of his father and indifference of his brother, in love with the bright, witty, sportswoman, Lady Julia. Walter Brooke, a young officer, quartered in Middlesworth nearby, a consummate dandy, lady's man, horseman, and improvident gambler. Sir Archibald Brooke, aging officer and gentleman, who has led the career of a Byronic hero and is now settled in England after the fever of adventure has died down, to watch over Helen, the daughter of the woman whom he loved and whom his brother married. The novel spends itself entangling and disentangling the affairs of these

principals and a few additional characters, including George Stoney, a gentleman manque who through force of circumstances is in trade. In addition there is a great variety of "bit" characters, more than usually appear in the novels, an arrangement probably suggested by the author's experiments with minor characters in *Cerise*. The patterned plot does not quite come off. As the book nears its close the novelist is forced to resolve the entanglement by too many hastily conceived and forced coincidences. This is a weakness which he never overcomes fully. It is particularly noticeable in the next two society novels, *The White Rose* and *M. or N.*, although in several of the "later" novels the writer manages with more success to avoid the kind of plot which makes such devices necessary.

But despite the stiff awkwardness of the story as it nears its end, *The Brookes of Bridlemere* contains more in quantity of Whyte-Melville at his most attractive than any other of his novels.[29] Among the society novels, too, it reveals more clearly than the others (except, perhaps, for *Satanella*) his scheme of values, which generally is more apparent in the historical romances.

Near Bridlemere are two families, one slightly above, one slightly below the Brookes, who are excessively proud of an old name despite some inconsistencies in the family tree: on a neighboring estate, Lord Waywarden, a farmer-aristocrat, with his Lady and his daughter Lady Julia Treadwell, a sportswoman, bright, lively, in the eyes of some watchers a trifle "fast"; in the town itself,

the Stoneys--George Stoney, his comfortable, motherly wife Isabella, and the little daughter, "Dot"; Philip Stoney also who like his brother engages in trade from necessity. Occasionally during the story another country neighbor appears, the young and attractive Duchess of Merthyr-Tydvil, usually, however, without the Duke who is too wrapped up in hunting to accompany his wife to balls and social affairs. Other minor characters include Ragman de Rolle, who idolizes Walter and generously supplies signatures for his bills; Miss Prince, elderly companion to Lady Waywarden and one-time teacher and friend of Mrs. Stoney; Mrs. Batters, elderly and complaining object of Helen's visits and attention, and mother of the shiftless, drunken Jem Batters.

Interlinking love stories run through the novel. Philip Stoney and Helen love one another although circumstances prevent mutual profession until the end. Jack Brooke and Lady Julia are similarly circumstanced. (Walter Brooke is attracted by Lady Julia's inheritance as well as by her charm, but is rejected.) Jack Brooke is kept from declaring his love chiefly by a natural modesty, but Philip's suit is delayed by a catastrophe--the burning of the newly built brewery into which all the family resources had been poured. In order to save money, Philip had advised George to postpone renewal of the insurance; so they are left penniless. All go to London where Miss Prince--already wearied of Lady Waywarden--sets up a boarding house in which they take rooms. George is too ill to work; Philip plods along as an accountant.

Walter Brooke's extravagance at cards and racing lead him into debt and dishonor, for he not only has Ragman de Rolle sign a bill for him, but manages to have him sign a duplicate bill on the pretext that the first was incorrectly made out, convincing his friend that the first is destroyed. Despite his precautions, both bills fall into the hands of the same money-lender, Mr. Pounder, whose shrewd and unscrupulous partner, Mr. Multiple, has already interested himself in the Brookes. Mr. Multiple makes an elaborate profession out of money-lending, combining it with gambling and other questionable practices. One of the many characters in Whyte-Melville who are "not quite gentleman" in appearance and manner, he nevertheless poses as one, and by moving in fashionable quarters, picks up information of use to him in his business. Recognizing the significance of the two bills, he uses his knowledge to force acceptance of a proposal of marriage from Helen, whom he desires and who has taken an instinctive dislike to him. Alone in her predicament--she cannot expose the

dishonor in the family to one outside it and will not to any of those within it--she assents.

Misfortune has brought the Stoneys to London. The end of the hunting season and the beginning of the London season brings Lady Julia to the city. A series of incidents concerning Walter's bills bring the others to London. Walter has told Jack he is in debt, mentioning one bill only. In a visit to Mr. Pounder, Jack becomes suspicious when he is shown two bills. A scuffle follows, and Jack is clubbed unconscious by Mr. Multiple who hid himself when Jack entered. The partners take Jack next door--coincidentally Miss Prince's boarding house--where the Scotch Dr. Blair takes care of him. Helen now comes to London to nurse Jack.

Multiple's downfall begins. The occupants of the house soon find that the victim of the "accident" is Jack Brooke, and little Dot Stoney identifies the man who brought him as Mr. Multiple whom she had seen in Middlesworth. But even more disastrous evidence is forthcoming. Jem Batters, who had disappeared after the fire, had not burned to death after all, but had sneaked away to London where, in partnership with "Nobbler" King, a thief, he makes a living stealing and reselling dogs. Attracted by Tatters, Jack's thorough-bred dog, Jem has followed him and has witnessed the crime. At first he and his partner in crime plan to blackmail the money lenders, but when Jem meets Sir Archibald Brooke by chance, the spark of feudal loyalty within him moves him to tell Sir Archibald the story. In the meantime Jem has been the means of bringing Lady Julia and Jack together. With Tatters in his army he crosses the Ride within sight of Lady Julia who recognizes the dog and buys him. She visits Miss Princes and the Stoneys, not realizing that Jack is there recovering from his injury, but Tatters immediately leads her to his master and to a mutual profession of love.

Sir Archibald now visits the money-lenders accompanied by Ragman de Rolle, who quick-wittedly declares both bills valid, though he does not deceive Sir Archibald. Now that the blackmailing strength of the bills is weakened, Mr. Pounder is quite willing to return them and Walter is cleared. One final step remains: in return for Sir Archibald's promise not to prosecute, Mr. Multiple writes Helen freeing her from all obligations. When the book ends, Helen, back at Bridlemere waits for Philip, who has been restored to propserity by a combination of circumstances, including the death of the rival brewer. (The brewer, the author tells the reader for the

first time, is a distant relative of Mrs. Stoney and leaves her a legacy sufficient--with additional support, presumably from Sir Archibald--to enable the Stoneys to buy the rival brewery. Furthermore, investigating the smoking ruins of the burned down brewery, Philip has made discoveries which lead to a series of chemical experiments concerning the process of making beer, which may reap him a fortune!) As for Walter, Sir Archibald frees him from his debts but insists that he leave the army, for though he remains undiscovered he has stained the honor of an officer.

### Section (15) The White Rose. 1868.

The White Rose,[30] last of the "early" novels, resumes the tone of the series (including Good for Nothing) which tends towards romantic tragedy. More objective in method than Good for Nothing, it includes a greater number of dramatic scenes, and the narrator disappears as a character in the story after the first chapter, relieving the book of the over-elaborate and tedious commentary which weighted down the earlier book. The quadrangular love affair basic to the structure of Good for Nothing is repeated but the conflicts among the principal characters intensified and deepened. In conception the book is an advance upon Good for Nothing and it comes nearest of all the "early" novels to genuine tragedy in which character and circumstance together produce patterns of complication leading to inevitable catastrophe.

But just as the Brookes of Bridlemere did not quite come off as a carefully patterned novel of sporting and

country estate life, so *The White Rose* does not come off as tragedy. For the author avoids his responsibilities and shifts to a melodrama of schemes and coincidences which bring the young man and woman together happily at the end. The shift divides the novel sharply into two parts. The first part is very nearly complete in itself as a serious study of four people and two unhappy marriages, rising to climax in a violent scene of some power. Everything else is anti-climax, and it is in part the novelist's attempt to carry on the novel to greater length that forces him into improvisation which is not even ingenious. (An almost identical structural situation occurs in one of the later novels, *Uncle John*.)

The novel is of interest in other ways. In describing the procedures of Gerard Ainslie in the fashioning of a popular melodrama for the stage, Whyte-Melville makes the most elaborate set of comments on writing to be found in his works, and suggests that the popular theatre may have had some influence upon his novels. *Also, The White Rose* shows more clearly than other novels (except, perhaps, the very last one, *Black but Comely*) his indebtedness to Thackeray.

### [Part One]

The chief characters of the story are Gerard Ainslie, a young man who at the beginning of the story is studying for the army; "Norah" (Leonora) Welby, attractive daughter of the neighboring clergyman; John Vandeleur, the neighboring "squire," older than the first two, a widower,

in the past a fast man of the world, a man of power and depth; and Fanny Draper, the seductive and impetuous daughter of the nearby miller. Gerard and Norah are in love, but Vandeleur, who has a passion for Norah, deliberately breaks the affair up by securing Gerard (unknown to him) a commission in the army which takes him away from the neighborhood and by paying Fanny to compromise him. Fanny falls in love with Gerard and willingly follows Vandeleur's directions, going to the provincial town where Gerard's first duty has brought him. (He had left without an opportunity to see Norah.)

At the Marston Rectory and at his own estate, Oakover, Vandeleur soon convinces Norah that Gerard is guilty of seducing an innocent miller's daughter. (Fanny intercepts all letters between the two young lovers and sends them to Vandeleur.) Finally he prevails upon Norah to marry him despite the discrepancy in their ages. In the meantime, Gerard is badly hurt in a steeplechase run, and Fanny nurses him back to health. During his convalescence Gerard reads an announcement of the marriage of Vandeleur and Norah, and out of gratitude to Fanny for her devotion, marries her. News of this is received at Oakover, and Norah, already unhappy in her marriage knows that all is over.

(Three other characters, who play a more prominent role in the second part of the novel, are Dandy Burton, one of Gerard's schoolmates, a dandy but not wholly a gentleman; Dolly Egremont, another schoolmate who proves later to be a loyal and firm friend both of Norah and Gerard; and Jane Tregunter, with whom Dolly is already in love, who continues in later days to be a friend to Norah.)

The scene shifts to Homberg on the continent where Vandeleur and Norah come upon Gerard and Fanny. Gerard is now an inveterate gambler, alternately flush and ruined (at this point ruined). Fanny's pathetic attempts to become a lady and her genuine devotion to Gerard meet now only with impatience, often with contempt, from her husband. Visits from the notoriously philandering Count Tourbillon only aggravate the situation so that both reach the end of their capacity for mutual forbearance. Vandeleur, too, realizing that he is not loved as he had hoped to be, that he has been a fool to believe it likely, reveals gradually a strain of madness, evident in outbursts of temper. Matters come to a further crisis when Fanny in desperation asks Norah for money, Norah pawns a bracelet for her, and Vandaleur discovers the bracelet in a pawn shop. The sequence comes to a close when Fanny, giving up all hope of winning even Gerard's respect, runs off with the Count,

and Vandaleur in one of his violent outbursts throws himself off a balcony on to the paving below.

## /Part Two/

During an interim before the next sequence of events Norah establishes herself as a wealthy, fascinating widow in London. Dolly Egremont (who had been of kindly assistance in after the catastrophe) and Dandy Burton are still acquaintances, as is Jane Tregunter. Gerard has made and lost a fortune in gold-digging in California and in sheep-raising on Vancouver's Island and returns to England penniless, losing his last two hundred pounds when he save a young child from drowning.

Gerard back in London begins once more to go down hill, eking out a subsistence by hack writing. A chance encounter with Mr. Barrington-Belgrave leads Gerard to playwriting and to brighter prospects. (Mr. Barrington-Belgrave has been a down-at-the-heels actor when Gerard knew him before in the provincial town where he met his steeplechase mishap.) Not long after this Gerard inherits a fortune and becomes a substantial man-about-town. In the meanwhile, Dandy Burton has been putting Norah into his debt by managing her business affairs. (When Gerard had been down and out Norah had forwarded funds to him, without his knowing it, through Dolly Egremont.) Dandy, who could not stand up under the chaff of army life is now looking for an heiress-wife. Having been turned down by Lady Jane, he proposes to Norah, trying to exert pressure by pointing out her financial indebtedness to him. She turns him down haughtily and coldly, making an implacable enemy of him.

Before Dandy's machinations start, a new series of events bring Gerard and Norah together once again. Following Norah on what appears to be a clandestine assignation, Dandy finds that all this time Vandeleur has been alive, but helpless and an imbecile as the result of his fall. Dandy's presence at his chair-side arouses Vandeleur to consciousness once more, and before he dies he is able to confess his part in the separation of Gerard and Norah. Meanwhile Dolly Egremont as manager of the theatre has had many meetings with Gerard. Moved by bitter remarks Gerard makes about Norah, Dolly tells him that the funds which supposedly were from Dolly himself came actually from Norah. Later Dolly is able to tell Gerard that Fanny is dead. (Count Tourbillon with whom Fanny has run away has told Dolly that she is buried in Brussells.)

Though both Gerard and Norah are now free, further complications arise and must be disentangled before they can be reunited. Dandy Burton alienates Gerard from Norah by showing him signed bills proving Norah's financial indebtedness to him and a letter from her addressing him in terms of evident affection. (Actually the letter, without salutation, was written to Jane and stolen from Norah's desk.) Further, the Count's habit of calling all his mistresses by the same pet name has confused his memory, and Fanny still lives, is, in fact, the same famous American actress, Mme. Molinara, for whose arrival the production of Gerard's play has been delayed. Gerard now winds up his affairs and intends to travel as a merchant ship owner. Before he leaves, Dandy ferrets out the secret of Mme. Molinara's identify. Actually Norah has already met her by accident and has refused Fanny's impulsive offer to keep her identity secret. Not knowing this, Dandy plans a melodramatic revenge, a first night theatre party to celebrate Gerard's play, expecting that both will recognize Mme. Molinara for the first time when she appears behind the footlights.

The opening night performance ends in a catastrophe which solves all the difficulties: there is a fire, and Mme. Molinara (alias Fanny Draper) is fatally burned, lingering under Norah's nursing long enough to make certain that Norah will marry Gerard and that the mischief Fanny has caused will be undone. The novel ends with the customary Whyte-Melvillean double wedding, first Dolly and Jane (who have made up their differences some chapters earlier on the hunting field, when Dolly promised to give up the theatre), then later Gerard and Norah.

## Section (16) Bones and I. 1868.

The White Rose, the last of the "early" novels was published in 1868. In the same year Whyte-Melville published a volume of essays entitled Bones and I which constitutes a kind of anthology of moral comment such as is scattered with generous hand throughout most of the novels.[31] Too banal in manner and ordinary in thought to be of intrinsic value to the reader of a later generation,

the book provides a convenient display of typical Whyte-Melvillean speculation. In addition the volume confirms the impression given by the novels that the pervasive melancholy which characterizes passage after passage is more than a literary pose, and the essay on "Haunted" with its concluding passage on duty is probably as near to Whyte-Melville's own philosophy of action as one can get from internal evidence of his writings.

The volume is ostensibly a series of dialogues between the author and "Bones", the skeleton in his closet. But the "dialogues" tend to break into long monologues either by the writer or his guest, and the device chosen at the beginning is undeveloped except for such humorous sallies as the following.

> Under no circumstances does he become a bore--that is why we get on so admirably together. Like a ghost, he speaks only when spoken to. Unlike a wife, refrains from monopolizing the last word. If he didn't rattle so on the slightest movement--a fault of anatomy, indeed, rather than temper--as a companion he would be--perfection. [32]

And (the writer to Bones):

> Listen to me. I won't make your flesh creep, for unanswerable reasons. I don't even think I shall freeze the marrow in your bones. [33]

And:

> "You mean selfishness," I retorted; "and I am surprised to hear a man of the world--I mean of the other world, or indeed, of any world whatever--assert so obvious a fallacy. [34]

And:

> I recollect a quaint old tombstone--I beg your pardon for the allusion. 35

And:

> Away you go, the breeze lifting your whiskers from the very roots (I forgot, you have no whiskers, nor indeed would such superfluities be in character with the severe style of your immortal beauty.) 36

An indication of the topics of the essays with brief excerpts is sufficient to show the tenor of the volume. The "Introduction" and the opening chapter, "On Waste," treat a theme recurrent in the reflective passages of the novels: "What is the object of it all? Cui bono? cui Bono? cui bono?"[37] In the final passage of the introduction the writer poses the question:

> At this moment the fire falls in with a crash, while a pale yellow flame leaps flickering out of the midst, and starting from my seat to light our lamp for the rest of the evening, I demand aloud, "What then is the purpose of Creation? From a quenched rushlight to an extinct volcano, from the squeak of a mouse to yesterday's leading article, from a mite smothered in a cheese to an emperor murdered in Mexico, is the march of Time but the destructive progress of a bull in a china-shop? Are the recurring centuries but so many ciphers added to the sum of a thriftless, objectless expenditure? Is the so-called economy of the universe but an unbridled, haphazard course of boundless and incalculable waste?" 38

The solution, proposed by Bones, is that given in Good for Nothing and several other novels:

> Self, indeed! He is fain to forget self because that therewith is bound up so much it would drive him mad to remember; and thus sorrow-taught, he merges his own identity in the community of which he is but an atom, taking his first step, though at a humble and immeasurable distance, in the sacred track of self-sacrifice, on which, after more than eighteen hundred

> years, the footprints are still fresh, still ineffaceable. Waste, forsooth! Let him weep his heart out if he will! I tell you that the deeper the furrows are scored, the heavier shall be the harvest, the richer the garnered grain. I tell you, not a tear falls but it fertilizes some barren spot, from which hereafter shall come up the fresh verdure of an eternal spring in that region.
>
> Where there's fruit in the gardens of heaven, from
> the hope that on earth was betrayed;
> Where there's rest for the soul, life-wearied, that
> hath striven and suffered and prayed. [39]

"Through the Mill." All men must be put through the mill of life, some for a while only, some for a whole lifetime. But

> the finest nature, like the truest steel, must be tempered in the hottest furnace; so much caloric would be thrown away on an inferior metal. Capacity for suffering infers also capacity for achievement. [40]

"Gourds." Jonah was exceedingly glad of the gourd; so most of us at least once in a lifetime; but "so surely as it comes up in a night, so surely must it wither in a day." The unfaithful woman is one example.

"A Vampire" is the story of a beautiful femme fatale who never ages, who ruins man after man, and who tells Bones at a chance meeting when Bones is old and in a Bath chair and the woman as young as when he first saw her years before that

> It is no fault of mine. It is fate. For him--for others--for all of us. Sometimes I wish it had not been so. . . . I can no more help myself than a drowning wretch, swept down by a torrent; but I am too proud to catch at the twigs and straws that would break off in my hand. [41]

"Gold for Silver." Many men and women must give gold and take silver in return; but it is better to give than to receive. (The essays are devoted to illustration of the universal fact.)

"A Day that is Dead" is a set of melancholy reflections on the past and upon the attraction which the present always find in the past, with a concluding speculation on the possibility that eternity is a circle and that the past may return again.

"The Four-Leaved Clover" pursues a series of meditations on man's eternal seeking after the ideal and on woman's imperviousness to reason. Bones at the end remarks: "I never knew but one woman who could understand reason, and she wouldn't listen to it!"

"Rus in Urbe" speaks of the pleasures of the country particularly when dreamed of by the city dweller (including a description of a run with the hounds) and when the country invades the city (including a description of Rotton Row).

"Haunted." The writer reflects on people as haunted houses. "Regret. . . has taken possession of an attic, in most of our houses, and refuses obstinately to be dislodged." Once again Whyte-Melville offers what he thinks to be the only solution.

> Not, be sure, till he [the ghost of regret or remorse] has torn and rent him cruelly--not till he has driven him abroad to wander night and day amongst the tombs,

> seeking rest, poor fevered wretch, and finding none, because of his tormentor--not till, in utter helplessness and sheer despair, stunned, humbled, and broken-hearted, the demoniac has crept feebly to the Master's feet, will he find himself delivered from his enemy, weary, sore, and wasted, but 'clothed, and in his right mind.' [42]

But the ghost can also be faced and finally be conquered, and in addition to prayer, Whyte-Melville counsels work:

> Work, work, till your brain is so overwrought it must rest or die. Pray, humbly, sadly, like the publican, while your eyes can hardly keep open, your hands droop helpless by your side, and your sleep shall be sound, holy, unhaunted, so that with tomorrow's light you may rise to the unremitting task once more. [43]

"Weight Carriers" reflects on the burdens which men must bear throughout life and the equalizing of external competitions by inward burdens.

"Shadows" reflects on the shadows which coming events cast, the possibility of foresight, and the vanities of anticipation to which most men cling.

"Guinevere" is a commentary on Tennyson's Guinevere in which Whyte-Melville describes the Queen much as he describes his repentant women in the novels. When Arthur, for example, visits Guinevere at the convent and "charges her to cleanse her soul with repentance and sustain her hopes with faith" and then "moves off stately and unflinching to confront the doom of Fate,"

> then, true to the yearning nature of her sex, yearning over with keenest longings for the lost and the impossible, Guinevere leaps to her feet, the tide of new love welling up in her wayward heart, fierce, cruel, and irresistible because it must be henceforth

utterly hopeless and forlorn. With her own hand she has put away her own happiness; and what happiness it might have been she feels too surely, now that no power on earth can ever make it hers again.[44]

Footnotes CHAPTER V.

1. Nethercote, work cited, p. 269, reverses Digby Grand and Tilbury Nogo in order.

2. Ellis (Mainly Victorians, p. 103) says that Digby Grand was written in obvious imitation of Pelham and Baker (History of the English Novel, VIII, 118) says that he took lessons from The Caxtons (the same reference is given in Guide to the Best Fiction, p. 327). But I cannot perceive the relationship. The Caxtons, a pleasant and engaging book, suggests more of the Whyte-Melville tone than Pelham. There is some slight similarity between the old soldier Roland Caxton and Sir Archibald Brooke of The Brookes of Bridlemere, however, both in character and in circumstance (both were in love with women whom their brothers loved), and there may be some slight similarity between Vivian Caxton and Walter Brooke. But the similarity is too general to be of much use as evidence of influence. Possibly Ellis had The Brookes of Bridlemere rather than Digby Grand in mind.

3. For an account of the gambling mania of the Regency and Post-Regency see Rosa, work cited, p. 23.

4. See Chapter iii for facts about Whyte-Melville's own addiction to Crockford's. Biographical evidence is too scanty to indicate how true Ellis's comment is (in Mainly Victorians, p. 103) that Digby Grand is "partly auto-biographical." Presumably Whyte-Melville in his first novel is using personal experience with less transformation than in the later ones. Digby's career is sufficiently one of external events to make the novel unrevealing even if it were strictly autobiographical.

5. Compare Young Edward in Our Country by John Mills. A ruined country squire still looks back to his days as a Regency buck and inculcates Regency standards of the sportsman-dandy in his son.

6. Compare Lever's Charles O'Malley, who is educated to be "an expert horseman, accurate shot, and skillful driver of four-in-hands". (Chapter i of Charles O'Malley).

7. Almost all Whyte-Melville's dandies, like Whyte-Melville himself, are from Eton, and there is no description in his novels of the frequently recurring scene of the fashionable story, portraying fast life at Oxford (as in Thackeray's Pendennis, Henry Kingsley's Ravenshoe,

Lawrence's Guy Livingstone). The only mention of Oxford in the novels occurs in Inside the Bar (p. 366). Young Plumtree had been at Oxford and had "kept the drag, too, for one season, but found his mode of life too dissipated to admit of the nerve requisite for that amusement. These dare-devil young gentlemen . . . ride, of course, directly at the leading hound . . . . It is a point of honour, I am given to understand, to turn away from nothing; and the man who can get through his horse the quickest, is esteemed to have won the laurels of the day. It is scarcely possible to imagine an education more calculated to make a horseman and spoil a sportsman than the Oxford drag."

> 7a. This last bumper, in addition to the many which I had already quaffed, prompted me to undertake in my own person, the most dangerous part of the performance, which was to ride the horse downstairs again on his way to his own apartments, and which portion of the equestrian feat, as it was not comprehended in the bet pending thereon, Segundo had positively declined to perform. Here, I thought, was an opportunity of out-Heroding Herod, and distancing even him who had instructed me in all such deeds of daring. Accordingly, much to the amusement of the drunken throng, and the reawakened horror of the landlady, I mounted the impatient Shamrock on his homeward journey, and accompanied by the good wishes of Topthorne, who was unable to leave his chair, and guided by the two most drunken gentlemen of the party, bearing each a silver candelabrum, with its load of waxlights swaying to and fro in their unsteady hands, I reached the top of the staircase without injury, and commenced my perilous descent. .
>
> The first landing-place we reached triumphantly; and we were now directly opposite the bar-window, which opened on the stairs, and through which, the sash being up, a very pretty attendant with Corkscrew ringlets, was watching the performance. Ambitious of distinguishing myself in the eyes of this Hebe, and demonstrating the thorough understanding which, under all circumstances, exists between the good horseman and his steed, I ventured most incautiously to hurry the careful pace at which Shambrock was so sagaciously toiling downstairs. A hind-foot slipped; a loud snort announced that the horse was thoroughly terrified; he lost his footing and his presence of mind at one and the same time; with a wild plunge forward he knocked down the leading torch-bearer, and we were enveloped in comparative darkness. I heard a scream of terror,

> and the crashing of wood-work--probably the banisters, as I found myself describing a parabola over my horse's head into the obscure; and although my fall was broken by its fair denizen and the whole interior furniture and economy of that snuggery which is denominated the bar, I was carried to bed sufficiently confused to be utterly unconscious of the devastation which accompanied my downfall.
>
> The bill which I had the next morning to pay gives me a vivid idea of the general smash created by my unexpected visit into this portion of the premises watched over by the Green Dragon. A gentleman flying head-foremost through an open window into the arms of a pretty barmaid, and with her bringing to the ground a half-dozen of sherry, a case of liqueur-bottles, a set of tea-things, a large firescreen, a cold apple-tart, and several jars of hot pickles, is lucky if he escapes, as I did, with a contused shoulder, a pair of black eyes (not quite such pretty ones as the barmaid's, and a swinging long bill to liquidate for this unceremonious method of vieing "called to the bar."
>
> - Tilbury Nogo, 218-220.

8. The obvious comparison is with Scott, of whom Professor Wagenknecht remarks, "If ever a human being had the Catholic temperament, Scott was that man" (work cited, p. 170). Whyte-Melville's fellow Scot and military novelist, James Grant, extols the Cavalier tradition of Scotland, and later in life he became a Catholic.

9. In One of the Six Hundred, Chap. xliii, he speaks of the "genuine Scotch snob in a high state of Anglophobia."

10. Baker's summary is accurate: "in novel after novel he revived the joys and thrills of the hunting field, the humours of country house society, and the giddy whirl of the London season" (History of the English Novel, VII, 233).

11. Compare the later novels, particularly Satanella.

/sic/" as "delightful transcripts of real women" (p. 39).

24. Lawrence in Guy Livingstone (Chap. vi) mentions Juvenal's strong-minded heroine, who left husband and home to follow the scarred, maimed gladiator, which suggests that Juvenal was the source of this part of the story.

25. Again Baker gives an inaccurate, or at least inadequate summary when he describes Cerise (History of the English Novel, VII, 117) as one which concerns Louis XIV and the Regent Orleans.

26. Chapman and Hall, "New Books and New Editions Recently Published," March 30, 1866/bound with Trollope's Hunting Sketches, 3rd ed., 1866/.

27. The laudatory review of Cerise in the Morning Post, 20 March 1866, quoted in the Advertisement in Trollope's Hunting Sketches, 3d ed., 1866, is somewhat excessive! "There are several chapters in this book which might be selected and set apart as fulfilling the very ideal of perfection in novel-writing."

28. The beginnings of this may be traced in Good for Nothing (see above, this chapter, Section 9).

29. Perhaps this is the reason why Lewis (Victorian Novelists, pp. 194 ff.) gives this novel such high praise.

30. For the white rose see also The Interpreter, 116. Also Byron's Bride of Abydos (the garden of white roses) and Thackeray's Pendennis, Chap. xlv. See also below, Chap. xvii, Sec. 2.

31. Almost any novel will illustrate this. The following selection is purely arbitrary: on the amount of "luggage" which a young man takes with him in life (Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 171); on love (Contraband, pp. 21-22); on what constitutes good society (General Bounce, p. 226); on French novels (Good for Nothing, p. 4); on the "drones" in society (Good for Nothing, p. 90); on the fact that most pleasures and pains are imaginary (Good for Nothing p. 274); on clean living (Inside the Bar, p. 258); on affectations and vulgarities in fashionable life (Roy's Wife, p. 84); on jealousy without love (Roy's Wife,

12. Compare Saintsbury, English Novel, p. 257: Kate Coventry is "a very lively and agreeable book."

13. Pp. 41-42.

14. Baker's description of the novel as recording "the doings of a beautiful agent of the Austrian government and her lover projected against the heroic fight of the Turks under Omar Pasha against the Russians on the Danube" (History of the English Novel, VII, 117) is hardly accurate.

15. See also below, Chap. vii, Sec. 2. Among the novels of the Crimean War are several by James Grant. One of the Six Hundred includes much the same materials as does The Interpreter: scenes at Messire's hotel (for which see also Smart's Breezie Langton) in Chap. lii, the Charge of the Light Brigade (Chaps. l-li), and the storming of Alma (Chap. xl), a clear picture of the operation, much clearer than similar scenes in Whyte-Melville. The novel also shows the same interest in the Eastern harem, including a story of an English girl, a prisoner in a harem, and her rescue. Turkish domestic arrangements and treatment of women seem to have fascinated the Victorian novelist: see also Smedley, Harry Coverdale, Chap. i, and even Thackeray (see below, Chap. xvii, Sec. 2). Omar Pasha and the "rascally Bashi Bazooks" which play an important part in The Interpreter are also in One of the Six Hundred (Chap. xxxiii) and are mentioned also in Smart's Breezie Langton. Compare also Henry Kingsley's description of the Crimean War and Charles' thoughts during a bombardment (Ravenshoe, Chap. li).

16. The Interpreter, p. 93.

16a. Same work, p. 105.

17. Nethercote, who knew Whyte-Melville, states that Holmby House was his most popular novel (work cited, p. 269), and it is the novel singled out for particular praise at the testimonial dinner given to Anstruther-Thompson (his Reminiscences, II, 11). Ellis (Mainly Victorians, p. 104) describes it as one of the best historical romances that have described the Civil War, but more important than his evidence is that of Sir John Marriott, himself the author of a life of Lord Falkland (1907), who praises Holmby House in his English History in English Fiction, 1940, p. 143: "Nowhere is Falkland (as regards

the outward man) better described than by G. J. Whyte-Melville in his Holmby House, which, if somewhat old-fashioned in style, is in substance as good as any other of the many excellent novels on this period." Part of the appeal of the novel lay in its romanticization of Northamptonshire as did its opening scene of the Pytchley Hunt (Sir Charles Frederick, for example, speaking of hunting in Northamptonshire talks of "passing Holdenby, or, as Whyte-Melville spells it, Holmby" (Fox-Hunting, p. 234).

18. The Hunting Field by "Harry Hieover" (Charles Brindley), 1850, listed in the Cambridge Bibliography, apparently belongs to this group.

19. Watson (work cited, p. 229) calls Trollope as a hunter "the typical townsman out for the day."

20. "Or All Down Hill." See Henry Kingsley, Ravenshoe, Chap. xxxvii, where he speaks of the family at Randor, a fast house "all downhill and no drag on."

21. Dedicated to Agnes Strickland, authoress of Lives of the Queens of England. For an account of the Strickland sisters, see Ellis, Mainly Victorians, pp. 152-158. See also Nethercote, p. 268-9, for an account of Whyte-Melville's meeting with Miss Strickland.

22. Randolph Faries, 2nd, Ancient Rome in the English Novel; a Study in English Historical Romance, 1923, p. 15.

23. The same work, p. 79. The author remarks that Whyte-Melville is indebted to Josephus' History and that Whyte-Melville is fairly accurate. For an interesting sidelight on this see John Buchan, Sir Walter Scott, 1932, pp. 29-30, where he notes that few Scottish children in the older days (the late Eighteenth Century) escaped Josephus. It is quite probable that Whyte-Melville drew upon a source he had become familiar with in childhood rather than boned up the history of the period for the novel. For Nineteenth Century praise of The Gladiators see Percy Russell, A Guide to British and American Novels . . .to 1893, 1894: "Whyte-Melville produced at all events, one masterpiece in The Gladiators" (p. 38). The writer foes on to speak of Whyte-Melville's picture of Julius Placidus as "a highly finished portrait" (p. 39) and of "the haughty and handsome Valeria and the tender Marianne

p. 248); on love and the slipping away of youth (Roy's Wife, p. 275); on the London season (Satanella, p. 29); on falling in love (mild cases provide innoculations against the disease) (Satanella), p. 39); on old age (Satanella, p. 40); on the responsibility of giving away the bride (Uncle John, p. 400); on philanderers loose in society (The White Rose, p. 318); on the devil-may-care spendthrift and the selfish cold-blooded sensualist (The White Rose, pp. 362 ff). Two essays which parallel those in Bones and I are on "gold for silver" in The White Rose, pp. 105-106, and the moral of the weights in Scotland and the Moors, p. 400.

32. P. 155.

33. P. 159.

34. P. 163.

35. P. 231.

36. P. 275.

37. The theme of cui bono is a recurring one in the novels. See for example Good for Nothing, p. 320, and Roy's Wife, p. 8 (John Roy wishes he had been bred a shoe maker or a stonemason--because of the dull dead pain for which there is no anodyne like the pressure of daily want and fatigue). For another passage on the vacuity of fashionable existence, see Good for Nothing, p. 62.

38. P. 156.

39. P. 168.

40. P. 179.

41. P. 218

42. P. 288

43. P. 290

44. Pp. 336-337.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE LATER NOVELS, WITH COMMENT ON STRUCTURE, DEVELOPMENT, AND STYLE.

### Section (1) M. or N. 1869.

With M. or N.[1] a new development in Whyte-Melville's novels begins, a shift in emphasis and tone, already discussed. The novelist tries again a carefully patterned plot such as he attempted in The Brookes of Bridlemere. Although the results are very much like those of the earlier novel, the initial pattern is more closely and expertly knit together despite the basic artificiality of the situation. Externally the story hinges on the balanced confusions caused by the similarity in appearance of two sisters who are unaware of each other's existence, and the conclusion depends upon a series of final coincidences as strained as those of The Brookes of Bridlemere. But co-existing with the artificial contriving is a development which is more successful, a development depending on the cumulative entanglement of Maud's stratagems in her high-handed use and dismissal in succession of three men.

Maud is first introduced after the death of her mother. Even in the extremity of her sorrow and despite her recent tears, her dark eyes are undimmed, her features unswollen, her hair smooth and trim, her dress unrumpled, and her hand steady.

> With her mother's beauty Miss Bruce had inherited but little of her mother's character; on the contrary, her nature, like that of her father's ancestors rather than his own, was bold, firm, and self-reliant to an unusual degree. She was hard and that is the only epithet properly to describe her--manner, voice, appearance, all were ladylike, feminine, and exceedingly attractive; but the self-possession she never seemed to lose would have warned an experienced admirer that beneath the white bosom beat a heart not to be reduced by stratagem, nor carried by assault; that he must not hope to see the beautiful eyes veil themselves in the dreamy softness which so confesses all it means to hide; that the raven tresses clinging coquettishly to that faultless head were most unlikely to be severed as a tribute of affection for anyone whose conquest would not be a question of pride and profit to their owner. Tenderness was the one quality Maud lacked. [2]

Maud's attractions soon bring conquests: Gentleman Jim, a gipsy-like figure from the London underworld who falls in love with her when he robs her father's house; Tom Ryfe, the social-climber and snob, a young lawyer pushing his way into society; Dick Stanmore, honest-hearted and open-handed young sportsman and dandy; and the handsome, proud Lord Bearwarden. Maud uses all four calculatingly, for her marriage to Lord Bearwarden is no less a part of her planning than her dismissal of the first three after they have served her purposes. But her past begins to close in on her, ironically just as she finds herself in love with her husband. In terms of the story thus far she faces at best a lonely success of the sort she has sought (but an empty success now that she wants not her husband's position but his affection), or at the worst a collapse of her fortunes and reputation and loss of what she has now

set her heart upon. To this point the story has unity and structure and integration of character and event. But just as in The White Rose, the novel shifts after the first part. Maud's predicament is now complicated by a failure of courage, an inability to take the one step which might save her marriage: full confession of what she had been about. The novelist prolongs this difficulty, but instead of working out inevitable consequences turns to melodramatic coincidences to rid Maud of the men who are now her enemies and to reconcile her husband to her.

Failure to develop the potentialities of the over-lapping situations in the first half of the novel is due in part to over-simplified and theatricalized characterization carried at moments nearly to the point of caricature: Tom Ryfe, a younger version of the older adventurers of the novels, men who are "not quite gentleman" is without scruple or principle, motivated by snobbish ambition as well as by his infatuation for Maud; Dick Stanmore is completely the amiable, devoted young man, so lacking malice or selfishness that even Maud's cruel ill-treatment cannot move him to an ungentlemanly word or act; Gentleman Jim is a man of violent single-minded emotions, completely Maud's slave as long as she is his benefactress and as long as she retains her own self-confidence, an equally violent enemy when his simple admiration is met with contempt and when Maud, harassed by

the predicament she herself has caused, loses her touch and her consistent haughtiness.

As in The Brookes of Bridlemere, Whyte-Melville represents schematically the different classes of society: the lower classes (by Gentleman Jim in M. or N.; Jem Batters and his mother in The Brookes of Bridlemere); the middle classes (satirically by Tom Ryfe and his uncle in M. or N.; sympathetically by the Stoney brothers in The Brookes of Bridlemere); the upper middle classes (Maud herself, her Aunt Agatha, Dick Stanmore in M. or N.; the Brookes family in The Brookes of Bridlemere), the aristocracy (Lord Bearwarden in M. or N.; Lady Julia and, in the background, the Duchess in The Brookes of Bridlemere). As in The Brookes of Bridlemere, the effect of a cross-section is deceptive, for all are motivated by the idea of the fashionable gentleman. Jim, who is himself nicknamed "Gentleman," admires Maud partly because she is a "lady," and asks only to be allowed to see her and speak to her occasionally, and to be given a kind word from his ideal lady. Tom Ryfe not only attempts to push his way into fashionable society but succeeds well enough to appear there although his snobbery is perceived by the true "gentlemen." (Even Lord Bearwarden, however, is deceived sufficiently to make Tom his second in an affair of honor.) Nina, who represents apparently the outcase members of society, is actually of gentle birth. Her illegitimacy was due to circumstance,

for her father intended to marry her mother and did after Nina's birth. She is reared by people who though not of the fashionable world are educated in the ways of gentility; and in the end she marries a gentleman, and with her sister, who is married to a Lord, moves in aristocratic circles.

Maud and Nina (M. or N.) are two sisters, almost identical in appearance who do not meet or know of one another's existence until near the very end of the story. The first is proud, self-possessed, haughty, almost masculine in courage and determination; the other is soft and feminine. Nina "Algernon" was born out of wedlock and put under the care of two maiden ladies, "Aunt" Jemima and "Aunt" Susannah Perkins, and incidentally under the care of their nephew, Simon Perkins, a young painter, for whose masterpiece, "The Faerie Queen,"[3] she models. Simon falls hopelessly in love with her.

But the main story concerns two phases of the life of Maud Bruce the other (and legitimate) sister, and begins with the death of her mother and shortly afterwards that of her father. Because the inheritance is in dispute, she is forced to turn to the family lawyer, Mr. Bargrave, but more particularly to his rascally nephew, Tom Ryfe, of undetermined origins but with ambitions to make his way in society and already on his way to being a smart dandy, knowing the right people. Tom Ryfe immediately recognizes in Maud the genuine lady of the sort he has been attempting to meet and enters into the case with special energies, securing actually a written promise that Maud will marry him if he completes the action successfully.

Before leaving Ecclesfield Manor, Maud makes another acquaintance who is to be of importance to her, Gentleman Jim, the housebreaker, whom she cuts off from escape by quick action and then coolly lets off with a word of caution. Gentleman Jim promises her he will be her man if she ever needs help. So infatuated with her is he that when she comes to live with her Aunt Agatha Stanmore in Belgrave square, he haunts the house, disguising himself as a street-sweeper or peddler as is most convenient.

At her Aunt Agatha's Maud soon dominates the scene and wins further admirers, particularly the amiable young Dick Stanmore, Aunt Agatha's step-son, another of the sound-hearted young horsemen who are happiest and most at home in the hunting field or behind the reins of a four-in-hand. Another admirer is the aloof and impervious Lord Bearwarden whose attentions to Maud are her greatest triumph. Maud is clear minded enough to realize the importance of her conquest and sets about to rid herself of the unwelcome and persistent Tom Ryfe. Her first step is to clear herself of her financial indebtedness to him. To effect this she pawns her jewels.

Matters come to a point at the ball which Aunt Agatha gives. Tom Ryfe has been openly snubbed, he thinks (it is actually Nina who has passed him by) and becomes ugly. Just before the ball Aunt Agatha insists that Maud wear her jewels. Dick is quick enough to see her embarrassment, finds out the circumstances, and brushing aside her explanations--which might have ended her predicament--rushes to the jeweler's and redeems her gems although it means putting himself in debt to the extent of selling his stud. That very night, however, despite her gratitude to Dick and her indebtedness to him, Maud skilfully maneuvers Lord Bearwarden into a proposal, and accepts.

Before she can be clear of Tom Ryfe and free to marry Lord Bearwarden, she must get the letter which he has. For this she calls upon the infatuated Gentleman Jim. Tom is waylaid, his letter stolen and returned to Maud. By the time he recovers his freedom, Maud Bruce is Lady Bearwarden.

Though she has achieved her ambition, Maud is still unhappy, for she has actually fallen in love with her husband. Lord Bearwarden has been betrayed once by a faithless woman and has not entered into a second marriage lightly. But Maud's guilty secrets show in her manner, and her husband feels that there is some lack of mutual confidence between them. Mutual pride intensifies the rift between them although they appear on the surface to be congenial. At this point Maud's high-handed acts catch up with her. She tries to rid herself of the visits of Gentleman Jim, but her obvious contempt breaks the hold she has over him and angers him. Nor is Tom Ryfe through with her, for he has found out that she was responsible for the highjacking. (Dorothea, hurt by Gentleman Jim's indifference has tracked him on the night of the high-jacking to Maud's and has seen the evident infatuation. In her

jealousy she has told Ryfe what she knows.)

Dick Stanwood by chance has run into his old acquaintance Simon Perkins and through him had made the acquaintance of Nina, Maud's double, and has fallen in love with her. (The subtitle of the novel is "Similia similibus curantur.") She has fallen in love with him, too, and so has ended the hopes of the kind and patient Simon. This new affair gives Tom Ryfe the opportunity which he wants. First he sends Lord Bearwarden an anonymous letter warning him that his wife is being indiscreet. Then he arranges that Lord Bearwarden will see Dick Stanwood and Nina Algernon together and think Nina is his wife. Ryfe's plans are particularly successful because Maud that very afternoon has deceived her husband into thinking she is busy shopping in order to meet Gentleman Jim in a final effort to bribe him out of the country. Despite his scruples, Lord Bearwarden checks at the shop outside which Maud's carriage waits, but cannot find her there. It is just after this that he sees Dick and Nina (Maud, as he supposes) in a carriage together.

Two further sequences bring the novel to a close. Lord Bearwarden, too proud to ask an explanation and too hurt by this second unfaithfulness to be charitable, leaves the house and stays at his barracks, the same refuge he had once found before. In addition he seeks justice on the field of honor and sends Tom Ryfe to arrange a duel across the Channel. Dick is puzzled by Tom Ryfe's message and puts the matter in the hands of Simon Perkins who is shrewd enough to suspect that something is wrong and delays in order to find out. Tom Ryfe is dissatisfied with this, for his purpose is to create a public scandal which will ruin Maud, not to arrange a secret agreement. But a new opportunity drops into his hand when Gentleman Jim, now seeking vengeance on the woman who has showed her contempt for him, approaches Tom, explains his part in past incidents, and proposes that Tom, with Gentleman Jim's help, abduct the haughty Lady Bearwarden. Tom's eagerness for revenge is enough to move him to assent, and he sends Lady Bearwarden an anonymous note making an assignation for that night, purportedly to explain how she has been wronged and her husband deceived.

Tom's letter making an assignation in the park near Lord Bearwarden's house reaches Lord Bearwarden himself instead of Lady Bearwarden. Recognizing the handwriting as that of the anonymous correspondent who had first put suspicions of his wife into his head, Lord Bearwarden determines to meet the appointment himself. In the meantime, Dorothea, spurned by Gentleman Jim, wanders

to the river and is about to drown herself when Maud stops her and takes her to her own home. Nina has overhead enough between Simon and Ryfe to seek to head off the duel by visiting Maud and arrives that afternoon shortly after Dorothea has been brought into the house. The two sisters are much taken with Maud. Simon and Dick in the meanwhile search for Nina, discover finally at a stationer's that she has inquired after the address of Lady Bearwarden. They start out in the same direction.

Nina ends her visit and leaves through the park just at the time of the assignation. Tom Ryfe and Gentleman Jim mistake her for Maud and seize her. Lord Bearwarden who has been watching dashes to the rescue. In the struggle Tom shoots Gentleman Jim by accident and is about to get away from Lord Bearwarden when Simon and Dick rush up and capture him. Tom gets his deserts and the lovers are reconciled.

## Section (2) Contraband. 1871.

Contraband, like most of the "later" novels, tells the story of a woman who tries to make her way into society and to a desirable match. It is much like the next society novel, Satanella, and belongs with it and with Uncle John in a series with relationships not unlike those among General Bounce, Good for Nothing, and The White Rose. Not wholly free from climactic coincidences of the sort which accumulate near the end of novels such as The Brookes of Bridlemere or M. or N., it is less dependent on them. It is superior in another structural way in that it develops rather fully a single situation without the violent shift to new situations for renewed interest which was evident in The White Rose. More clearly than in other early novels, the whole plot grows out of character.

Although this is true of the plot, it is less true of the tone, for there is towards the end a shift in tone from that of light, satirical comedy of fashionable life to sentiment and pathos. For several chapters the rebellious plot of Jin Ross and Mrs. Rose Lascelles--the one a moneyless "companion" dependent on her wits, the other a young and well-to-do widow--to cause as much turmoil in male breasts without submission to any single member of the stronger sex provides a succession of amusing scenes. But as this phase of the story exhausts itself, the pathetic story of Jin's past and her young son assumes the ascendancy, and the sentimental romance which has progressed pleasantly between the young officer Frank Vanguard and the attractive young Helen Hallaton is troubled by the machinations of an adventurer villain. These developments in the plot are prepared for early in the book, but the shift in tone disrupts the unity of effect.

"Jin" (Virginia) Ross and Mrs. Rose Lascelles make a chance acquaintance when Jin, leaving Blackgrove, the estate of Sir Henry Hallaton, gives a ride in her carriage to Rose who is caught in the rain at the end of a day's hunt with Sir Henry. Rose is a woman of the world with an eye to the main chance but with a sound heart, and in the enviable position of being a widow, childless, young, and well off. Jin is without money, dependent upon her wits, and of unknown antecedents. She has just given up her position as companion to Helen, daughter of Sir Henry. The two like one another immediately and discover another bond: Sir Henry has made advances to both within the same day. Together they declare warfare on the other sex and scheme to cause as much discomfort to the male heart as is possible. Jin

comes to live with Rose and is soon accepted in society as Rose's cousin.

Their immediate victims are "Uncle" Joseph Groves, middle-aged bachelor who is smitten by Jin's black eyes and raven hair, and Mr. William Goldthred, somewhat backward in gallantry, but loyal and genuinely devoted. Their activities are by no means limited to these two, however, and their ventures further afield serve the double purpose of making additional hearts uncomfortable and plaguing those of the two birds in the hand. It is not long, however, before the difference in their natures sets them somewhat at cross purposes. Rose though worldly has a heart and occasional qualms of conscience; Jin is energetically vindictive. Her extreme vindictiveness draws comment from Rose and leads her to tell her story: of her parentless childhood and education in a convent; her career as a music hall singer in Paris when she was left to shift for herself at sixteen; her marriage to Achille Picquard who soon deserted her, explaining that their marriage was fictitious, her loss of the one remaining object of affection in her life, her little boy Gustave, in a flood, and her battle of wits for a living since.

During the Ascot races they visit at the "Lilies," the villa of Uncle Joseph, and in the party are Sir Henry and his daughter Helen. Sir Henry is an imperturbable roue and despite his possession of an inherited estate, nearly impecunious as well. Although his philanderings did not begin until after the death of his second wife (his heart had been hardened since his first wife deserted him), and despite the fact that he guards the reputation of his daughter Helen scrupulously, he now makes love habitually to all pretty women. Even the presence of two women who have matched notes about him does not disturb him, and both of them (particularly Rose) flirt enjoyably with him much to the discomfiture of Messrs. Grove and Goldthred and of Helen herself.

Further complications begin when Jin meets Frank Vanguard, a young officer quartered nearby, and is rescued by him when the skiff in which he has given her a lift up the river overturns. Her continued flirtation with him is partly a continuation of the game which she and Rose have set for themselves, but her heart is caught, too, increasingly as the acquaintance ripens. In the process Helen Hallaton is hurt, for she and young Vanguard are already in love although their affection is barely past the inarticulate stage. To Jin, however, all is fair

in her war. When she notices at breakfast that in addition to the invitation all have received from Mr. Goldthred (who had been forced to return to London) Helen has another letter to which she responds with excitement, Jin watches the outgoing mail and exchanges Helen's letters so that Mr. Goldthred receives the one intended for Captain Vanguard (a warmly expressed invitation to come to Blackgrove to consult a "third party" who must have a say in the matter) and Vanguard receives that intended for Mr. Goldthred (a very formally phrased declination of the invitation. Vanguard takes this to be Helen's cruel rejection of his proposal of marriage, additionally cruel because at a reception on the day that he receives the letter, she whispers that her answer should have arrived at his club.

Meanwhile Jin's past comes to life. At a cottage near the "Lilies" she has come upon a little boy who reminds her of her lost Gustave. Mrs. Mole who keeps him is not his mother, but keeps him for a "foreign" gentleman who pays her for the boy's keep. Jin keeps watch and identifies the foreign gentleman as her own former husband, M. Picquard. (It was an attempt to escape meeting him face to face that brought her to the river bank and her ride in the skiff with Frank Vanguard.) M. Picquard has not met Jin, but is a familiar figure at the race tracks and military barracks, wherever fast life is led, although the young officers recognize him as an adventurer who is "not quite a clean potato" and his only success in London society has been at such homes as those of the scheming Mrs. Battersea and her good-hearted but fast young sister, Kate Cremorne, a home not quite accepted by the ladies of Belgravia. (Most of the men in the story appear at Mrs. Battersea's, however.) John Picard, as he is known at the race tracks and in the Court Guide, has his eye already on Helen and has struck up a considerable friendship with Sir Henry, an acquaintance cemented by financial ventures in which Sir Henry involves himself following Picard's advice.

Rejected as he thinks, by Helen, Frank renews his attentions to Jin who conducts her battle successfully while Helen pines and Rose protests against carrying their play war so far. But Jin now sees prospects of security and love--for she has become fond of Frank--and goes her own way, finally bringing Frank to a proposal and to a willingness to take the little boy, her "sister's son." Arrangements are made for Frank to meet her in the skiff at the river bank near Mrs. Moles', and Jin has the little boy, who goes by the name of Johnny, waiting there at

the appointed time. Unfortunately his military duties have kept Frank longer than he had planned, and he has had to delegate to a friend, sworn to secrecy, the task of keeping the appointment and taking Jin to the Windsor Hotel. So Jin is met by M. Picard, her own husband.

Picard is genuinely fond of the boy whom he had rescued by chance from the flood at Lyons, but is willing that Jin keep him and marry Vanguard provided he can see the boy at regular intervals. His intention to use the presence of the boy as a hold over Jin and therefore over her husband as a useful acquaintance is clear. Jin agrees in turn to free Picard of all responsibility to her and to the boy. But once alone at the hotel Jin finds that her affection for Frank and her respect for him will not permit her to hang such a noose around his neck. She sacrifices her personal happiness, escaping without trace to London, leaving behind her only a note explaining her own unworthiness.

Frank searches for her in vain; Helen continues unhappy and unwell; Picard furthers his schemes. But Picard has not counted on Sir Henry's devotion to his daughter. Sir Henry prefers to face ruin rather than recoup at the cost of making Helen the wife of a man like Picard. (Really it is Helen who faces the ruin while Sir Henry enjoys himself on limited rations on the continent, safe from his creditors who must deal more generously at home with a woman than they would with Sir Henry.) Rose comes to Helen's aid. She too has become seriously entangled in her play-war and Mr. Goldthred's devotion and honesty have won her heart. She invites him to her aid, or rather to Sir Henry's aid for her sake, and accepts him as a husband as well.

Little Johnnie had caught fever in the rain on the day Jin abducted him, and his illness lingers in the hot city summer as Jin's funds run out and her health weakens. By chance Kate Cremorne comes upon her and helps her, for Kate knows Jin although Jin has never met her. Jumping to conclusions, Kate gets Frank Vanguard to visit, but Jin, not without an inward struggle, sends him away after explaining that she had been responsible for the supposed rebuff of which he thought Helen guilty. The solution of that mistake is near anyway, for Helen is staying with Rose and Mr. Goldthred has an opportunity to see her handwriting, recognize it as that of the mysterious letter he had received, and turn his facts over to Rose. Helen is a lenient judge and the two lovers are reunited. Sir Henry, at loose ends, suffers the indignity of being refused by Kate Cremorne, and then goes to Buxton, the

resort town, for relief from the gout, where he watches Uncle Joseph making comfortable love, this time to a woman his own age.

Jin's boy continues to weaken, and Jin sends for Picard, who is too harrassed by debts and misfortune to do more than show by a touch of compassion that there are sparks of a better man in him and to make an honest woman of Jin by telling her that their marriage was legal after all. But his sentiment fades quickly, and he leaves Jin to her lonely vigil, for although her friends rally to her support now, it is too late. She watches her son die and sinks to her knees, purified by her suffering and submissive to God's will.

## Section (3) Sarchedon. 1871.

Sarchedon, the last of the long historical novels, intervenes between Contraband and Satanella. Somewhat laborious in its detail, it is a picture of Semiramis the Great Queen of Babylon, beginning shortly before the death of King Ninus and lasting through the campaign against the Armenians. Its effect is one of continued pageantry and mass scenes showing the military might of Assyria and Babylon and the orgiastic worship of Baal, mingled with conventional love scenes and melodramatic assignations and escapes. In structure it is very much like The Gladiators.[4] The cast of characters, too, is very similar. But there is more action and romance which despite the length and elaborateness of the book are sustained with considerably greater skill than the writer shows when dealing with contemporary life.

Central to the plot, which is complex in development, are the Queen, a goddess, beautiful, proud, ambitious; the young warrior Sarchedon, for whom the Queen conceives a passion; Ishtar, daughter of the captain of the hosts, who returns Sarchedon's love and spends the story after the death of her father fleeing the attentions of Ninyas and accompanying Sarchedon in his adventures; Assarac, the scheming high priest of Baal, whose passion for the Queen and desire to be de facto ruler of Babylon are conflicting ambitions which bring about his final downfall; Ninyas the almost effeminately beautiful son of Ninus and Semiramis who rules, at the end of the story, his hands guilty of the blood of his mother; Ninus, the aged warrior whose decline is part of the story and who dies on the day of the Feast of Baal in a plot arranged by Semiramis and Assarac. Merodach, Sarchedon's wonderful horse, should be added to the cast of characters.

Among the minor characters are Arbaces, the old warrior and captain of the hosts, murdered on the Feast of Baal when Ninyas arranges an abduction of Ishtar; Kalmin, the Queen's favorite maid-servant; Beladon, a young priest fellow-schemer with Assarac (whom he finally succeeds) and suitor for the favors of Kalmim; Sethos, the cup-bearer to Ninyas, redeemed by a loyalty to the sensual and selfish prince, and rewarded in the end by the love of Kalmim; Sargon, the King's shield-bearer who on the Feast of Baal avenges the king's cruel punishment of his son; Sadoc, the Jewish prisoner and patriarch, the purity of whose religion moves even Assarac to defend the religion of Baal and reveal a mysterious center, a kind of unknown Eros, behind the popular orgiastic excesses; the Pharaoh of Egypt and Phrenes his councilor; Rekamat, a mistress of Ninyas; and the Anakim, desert marauders with whom Sarchedon and Ishtar break bread, from whom they receive protection, and with whom they finally live in retreat from the worldly splendor and vanity of Babylon; Aryas, King of Armenia, noble and beautiful warrior (an English gentleman in character) who is killed defending his country from the final onslaught of Semiramis.

Three chief phases of the story divide the book into parts. During the first phase which begins upon the return of Ninus the old king to Babylon, the main characters are introduced, the complications of loves and ambitions developed. This division ends when Semiramis and Assarac arrange that Ninus shall be taken up in a cloud of fire to the heavens on the Feast of Baal so that Ninyas, who will be a plaint tool in the hands of his mother, can be king. Ishtar is captive in Ascalon where Ninyas has abducted her; Sarchedon is in Egypt among the

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Jews in bondage, carried there by Sadoc who picked him up wounded, in the desert.

During the second part of the story Ninyas struggles unsuccessfully for power against his mother and at the end is held prisoner while Semiramis assumes the throne after a trumped-up "Ninyas" (Semiramis in disguise) supposedly abdicates. Sarchedon has been released from Egyptian captivity and has recovered Ishtar from the apartments of Ninyas. But he is separated from her again, sold as a slave to traveling merchants. Ishtar, temporarily united with Sarchedon, has commanded the protection of the Anakim by breaking salt with them and has won their devotion. After risking her life to arouse Semiramis to attempt the release of Sarchedon, she returns to them.

The third part relates the invasion by Semiramis and the Assyrians of Armenia where Sarchedon, sold into slavery, has risen to be shield-bearer to the King, to whom he bears an unusual resemblance. Sarchedon throws his lot in with his new protector against the Goddess-Queen whose real purpose is to secure Sarchedon for herself. The siege of the mountain stronghold of Arayas and the battle in which Aryas is killed takes the greater part of this section of the novel. The final chapters bring to a swift close the attempt of Assarac, returned to Babylon, to seize the power, narrate Semiramis' revenge, Ninyas' assumption of the full power when his mother is "taken up to the Gods." Semiramis' assumption that it was Sarchedon who was killed on the Armenian battle field has freed him from Assyrian attentions, and he has returned to live with Ishtar among the Anakim.

## Section (4) Satanella.[5] 1872.

Several of the other novels contain passages more dramatic or complex than Satanella, but in consistency of tone and unity of effect this is the most successful of his works after Kate Coventry and Market Harborough, and and in maturity and in finesse it is superior to the first of these two. Much of its merit, particularly in

relation to the other novels is the extent to which the writer sustains a single situation, developing it fully enough for it to become substantial; relates plot to character; eliminates the artifices of crude coincidence; and handles a sentimental relationship with restraint and tact.

Once again, as before in Tilbury Nogo, Kate Coventry, and Market Harborough, restrictions in length and in scope are allies of quality. The White Rose or M. or N. might have been much better novels had the writer brought them swiftly to an end about half way through as he does Satanella, and with these two earlier novels in mind it is easy to fancy Whyte-Melville extending this one beyond its capacity. Two characters, Blanche Douglas ("Satanella") and General St. Josephs dominate the story. So once again the advantage of clearly conceived characters is evident. Between this and the fact that the restriction of the scope of the story contributes to its success there is a definite relationship. For Whyte-Melville's ability to create character is limited. He is capable of relatively simple types only. If characterization and plotting are to be carefully integrated, if incident is to issue from character and in turn modify or reveal it, the plot must be correspondingly restricted in scope.

Blanche Douglas is very much like Jin Ross in the immediately preceding society novel, and the germ of Satanella can be seen in the relationship in Contraband between the middle-aged Uncle Joseph Groves and Jin. But Whyte-Melville was attracted by the situation as early as General Bounce, which merely exposes the General's infatuation with Mary Delaval as comedy, a side touch which is not developed. Vandeleur in The White Rose and Lord Bearwarden in M. or N. are older men, but they are experienced and dominate their relationship with the women they love. Maud in M. or N. managed other men skilfully enough but not the man she loved. Contraband is the first novel to present women who are masters of their relationships with the other sex completely and throughout. Satanella does not end the sequence, however. If Satanella can be considered a development partly outlined in Contraband, then Uncle John, the next society novel, can be considered in turn to be a development partly outlined in Satanella. For the relationship in Uncle John between Algernon Lexley and Laura is similar to that between the General and Blanche. At the end of Satanella, Blanche tells the General that if she had it to do over again, she would accept him. In effect that is what happens in Uncle John. (The result is a queer reversion to elements of the "early novels.")

The tone of Satanella in most passages is similar to the initial tone of Contraband, one of the comedy of fashionable life and of relations between the sexes when women are both capable and witty as well as beautiful. The restraint shown in the management of the General who never becomes a ridiculous sentimental old man and of Blanche who never becomes either the completely unscrupulous calculating man-hunter nor a melodramatically wronged woman, is extended to other characters. Mrs. Lushington the scheming widow is kept well within the bounds of credibility, the dashing Walters is always what he is, carefree, reckless, warm-hearted, and the young Irish sweetheart of Walters is given no greater role than her obvious limitations as a second heroine permit. Unlike Contraband, Satanella is not confused by a shift to the obtrusively pathetic. Blanche clearly has a past which is like that of Jin, but it remains a mystery and the hints are more effective than the explanations of the preceding novel.

Blanche Douglas, imperious, fast and mysterious, attracts many admirers, among them the middle-aged General Valentine St. Josephs whose old-fashioned reserve hides a sensitive heart, and the devil-may-care young dandy, officer, and horseman, John Walters, known as "Daisy." Blanche's heart belongs to Daisy, but she encourages the General sufficiently to keep him dancing attendance on her, somewhat pathetically but without loss of dignity. Daisy Walters himself is in love with the Irish girl Norah, daughter of Lord and Lady Macormac; and several scenes, including the Punchestown Universal Service Handicap, at which all gather as guests of the Macormacs,

are laid in Ireland. Norah returns Daisy's love. Mrs. Francis Lushington, a mildly malicious woman whose husband leaves her free to go her own way in society, sets herself up as Blanche's rival and throughout the story attempts to take Blanche's suitors away from her. Her stratagems accelerate the plot but do not change it vitally. Soldier Bill, Daisy's close friend and one of Mrs. Lushington's entourage, plays a minor role. One more character is important: Daisy's horse, Satanella, named after Blanche Douglas and (when Daisy is in town) at Blanche's disposal.

Daisy is ruined to the amount of three thousand pounds when riding Satanella in the Handicap. (He loses the race when he turns out to avoid running down a child.) Blanche tests her General by asking him for three thousand pounds, and sends it anonymously to Daisy who is in hiding from his creditors, in Ireland, where he finally proposes to Norah. Mrs. Lushington's prying inquisitiveness discovers the arrangement, and she sets in motion the next development by an anonymous letter to the General and by explaining to Soldier Bill that Daisy in honor must marry Blanche. The General insists that Blanche accept his proposal of marriage before making explanations. She both accepts and explains, and shortly after, rejects Daisy's proposal despite the fact that in doing so she is turning down the man whom she really loves. (Daisy's manner left no doubt that he was proposing from a sense of duty.)

Despite her gratitude to the General, not only for his material aid but for his generosity and sympathetic tact and constant courtesy and genuine affection, Blanche is unhappy, and still in love with Daisy. When Mrs. Lushington tells her the news of Daisy's approaching marriage to Norah, she realizes that her attempt to reward the General for his devotion cannot succeed. She runs away suddenly, leaving only a note saying that she is not good enough for him, loves him too well in a different way to continue as she has, and that he must forgive and forget.

One more incident ends the book, a day of hunting with the Queen's hounds, at which all are present, including Daisy, Norah--now his wife, Mrs. Lushington, the General, and a woman in black who has been the object of curiosity as a reckless and mysterious horsewoman. The woman, of course, isBlanche Douglas, and the hunt ends with an accident in which Satanella the horse breaks his back and Blanche herself is mortally crushed. She lingers for two days, is able once more to ask forgiveness of the General and to tell him that had she felt as she feels now she would not have fled from him. The General seeks forgetfulness in foreign duty.

## Section(5) Uncle John. 1874.

Uncle John is a curious mixture which at the beginning carries on the subjects handled in Contraband and Satanella and in the second part reverts to earlier novels,[6] both in incident (materials are repeated from Digby Grand,[7] Tilbury Nogo,[8] and Good for Nothing[9]) and in mood. The novelist seems to have exhausted his energies of invention in the last three society novels and to have exploited to the limit his capacity for the fashionable comedy of manners which eschews, relatively at least, earnest moralizing.

Like The White Rose and M. or N., Uncle John breaks into two parts, the first part very nearly complete in itself, consistent in tone and development, the second part a forced continuation in which the consistent mood of the first is broken and in which only accident and coincidence prevent the story from ending at any moment. The first part is a continuation of the situation developed in Contraband and Satanella; it is in fact Satanella with an alternate ending.

/Part One/

The setting is a house party of considerable size at Plumpton Priors, the country house of Uncle John and Aunt Emily Dennison. Miss Laura Blair, a self-possessed young woman, somewhat battered by the world, independent, cosmopolitan, and somewhat superior to the provincial surroundings, is actually ready to settle down. She set her heart on (and her cap at) Horace Maxwell, young horseman and dandy (the first in the novels to appear from the foreign office rather than the army). But Maxwell is attracted to young Annie Dennison, niece of the

owners, a sportswoman of the Helen Hallaton and Nell Brooke type. Percy Mortimer, Maxwell's friend, a world traveler, acquainted with Laura's past, is similarly attracted. So Laura finally accepts the proposal of Algernon Lexy, the neighboring clergyman, especially when he shows a noble indifference to her past, brushing aside (like the General in Satanella) all explanations until she accepts him. Uncle John Dennison, mild and kindly, maneuvers his termagant and nagging wife, Aunt Emily, into approving the match. In the meanwhile skating and fox-hunting, billiards, flirting and piano playing fill the time. Among others at the house party are two young officers Nokes and Stokes and a young Etonian cub, H. G. F. Perigord. The tone is one of lively comedy throughout.

Algernon and hiw new wife are surprisingly happy considering their disparate past, and she soon learns to love his noble, unselfish, and considerate nature, accepting the quiet monotony of life as a release after her adventurous career of traveling from place to place.

At this point Whyte-Melville turns from fashionable comedy to sentimental drama, and in addition resurrects situations used earlier. Laura is already a Kate Cotherstone (Tilbury Nogo) turned heroine: like Kate she has led a shady life, using her beauty to attract victims for her gambling husband (even her method was similar to Kate's, a musical code by which she could tell her husband the value of an opponent's hand as she watched from the piano); like Kate she marries a rural clergyman. Now in addition, the returned-husband-long-thought-dead plot, used particularly in Good for Nothing, is revived. The story from this point on is one of sacrifice and of the woman wronged by the verdict of society.[10]

/Part Two/

Laura genuinely loves her husband now, so that when her adventurer husband, whom she had supposed dead, returns and clearly intends blackmail, rather than expose Algernon to shame and humiliation, she prefers to be thought a heartless jilt, and disappears from the sight of both husbands. After a brief barracks interlude during which Delancy, Laura's husband, now known as Francis Dalton, mulcts Nokes and Stokes of several pounds by sharp billiard playing and sharper forgery, the scene shifts to London.

The way is paved for a solution when Dalton, the "Slasher," looking for his wife, intrudes upon a ball given by the Pikes, is recognized and followed by Perigord. Perigord has been a pupil of Lexy and was living with the Lexy's when Laura disappeared. Before her disappearance he had seen Dalton around the cottage making inquiries. Young Perigord is nearly convinced by Dalton's story, but Maxwell, who has followed Perigord, catches the adventurer cheating the young Etonian at cards. Maxwell and Perigord escape from the Leicester Square hang-out after a scuffle. When they tell their story upon their return, Mortimer recognized the description of Laura's husband by the scar on his hand, and Nokes and Stokes recognize the description of the man who had cheated them. Action by Nokes puts Dalton in prison.

Although Laura is partly cleared in the eyes of those who have heard the story, they decide not to tell Lexy--for no apparent reason--and the solution is postponed further. Some time afterward Lexy, as prison chaplain, is called to attend a mortally injured prisoner who had fallen in an attempt to escape. The prisoner is Dalton, who makes a full confession of the situation. Lexy, whom suffering and heart-break have aged but not broken, now transfers to a city parish in his effort to find Laura.

But finding Laura is not an easy task. Annie Dennison, now engaged in social work among the poor in the same city parish to which Lexy comes, meets Laura when Laura, at the end of her rope, applies for a teaching position. Womanly confidences restore them to mutual sympathy. But Annie does not know of Dalton's death or of Lexy's search for Laura, and so consents to keep Laura's secret. Still another coincidence, however, resolves the problem. Uncle John is dying, and Laura, now a nurse, is sent to the Dennisons by the doctor who employs her. Lexy too visits the dying Uncle John. Even so there is

nearly a slip, for Laura leaves the Dennisons without seeing Lexy; but the clergyman sees her get off the same bus in which he is riding, alights himself, catches up to her, and claims her once more as his wife.

In the meanwhile the story of Annie's love affair has been continued. Despite her attentions to Percy Mortimer when he was convalescing at Plumpton Priors after a hunting accident, Annie really loves Horace Maxwell. Youthful pride and interacting coldness keep the two apart although occasional moments of impulsive warmth encourage both. When all go to London for the season, the courting continues. Mortimer, whom Horace Maxwell believes to be the favored man, proposes to Annie at a dance and is rejected. Armed with knowledge of this, Horace approaches Annie only to be received coldly. (Among other reasons for Annie's coldness is her accidental witnessing from a distance of a chance encounter between Maxwell and Mrs. Lexy, whose intimacies with Maxwell, before Laura accepted the clergyman, Annie had already suspected. In a youthful huff Maxwell has the foreign office transfer him to Vienna, from which rumors of a downward career reach Annie through Mortimer. But Mortimer is not a vengeful rejected suitor and acts as intermediary between Annie and Horace, clearing up their mutual difficulties and opening the way for a marriage which is hastened by Uncle John's desire to see them wedded before he dies.

Uncle John is a patient, almost saintly character, who has suffered gently under the tongue-lashings of the selfish and somewhat malicious Mrs. Dennison. Sentimental scenes built around Uncle John's final illness and Mrs. Dennison's repentance fill out the end of the novel as scenes of their marital difficulties filled out the narration of the house party. Aunt Emily's bitterness in marriage is motivated by the same past history of disappointed love which Whyte-Melville has given other characters in the novels. (Laura, in fact, is the daughter of the man who had deceived Aunt Emily. Now that Laura is grown and parentless, Aunt Emily assumes a protective role over her. It is this relationship which brings Laura to the house party at the beginning of the story.)

This complete reversion to an earlier mood in the second part of Uncle John marks the end and reversal of a trend in the preceding society novels toward the comedy of fashionable life which overlooks

the serious underlying moral issues and places emphasis on the glitter, skill, and wit of the fashionable characters. Successful comedy of this sort depends to some extent upon intellectual and social freedom of both sexes, and Whyte-Melville was too thoroughly committed to the older conception of the relationship between the sexes to carry his experiments very far. Two later novels show the same mixture and the same reversal of mood part way through the story.

## Section (6) Katerfelto. 1875.

Katerfelto is a lively romance of the late eighteenth century with a slight plot built around a duel, a Jacobite plot, and the continuous flight of the hero from the authorities. Gypsy scenes add color to the story, but the novel depends upon adventures on horseback for excitement and movement. Successful within somewhat conventional limits, the book had an attraction for young readers of the next generation who in maturity give testimony to its evocation of a mood of glowing excitement.[11]

Young John Garnet, like other characters in Whyte-Melville's historical novels, is the scion of a house which has devoted its loyalties and its fortunes to the Stuarts. In an unwitnessed duel he kills his man and, wounded badly himself, is taken into the house of Katerfelto, an elderly Jew who is scientist, doctor, money lender, agent for the exiled Stuart, and one-man secret service bureau (turning his wide knowledge of private

affairs to personal profit as well as to the benefit of the causes he serves). While John recovers there from his wound, Thyra the gypsy girl falls in love with him; Lord Bellinger comes to borrow money--he is about to return to his county with a list of the names of Jacobite plotters; Parson Gale, a brutalized, athletic clergyman comes seeking information about the man who killed his brother in a duel (the man is John Garnet although Katerfelto keeps his secret for the time being). One further link is added at this point when it comes out the Parson Gale is the man who once incurred Thyra's hatred by a gross insult at a country fair.

Katerfelto sends John Garnet on a mission to rob Lord Bellinger of the list of names. In this he is aided by Thyra, who runs away from Katerfelto in order to be with Garnet, and returns to her gypsy tribe which she brings to Garnet's support after Garnet has lost his money and temporarily his horse to Lord Bellinger. (The horse, a central character in the story, was once the property of a highwayman, since hanged, and has been given to Garnet by Katerfelto, after whom Garnet names him.) The leader of the gypsies in this incident is Fin Cooper to whom Thyra had been promised in marriage and who warns Thyra of the revenge gypsies take on their own kind when they desert the tribe for the "giorgies."

Garnet escapes to Porlock Bay where he falls in love with Nelly Carew, who keeps the cottage for her aged and dying father. She returns John's love, but the love affair is complicated by the fact that Garnet is now an outlaw and the fact that Parson Gale is infatuated with the same girl. (In view of the reappearance of the dead outlaw's horse, the countryside supposes him to be still alive although his execution had been duly witnessed and reported.) Also London has become too hot for Katerfelto the Jew. Disguised now as a Jesuit, he lives with the gypsy tribe. Believing himself safer if Garnet is out of the way, Katerfelto has told Gale that John Garnet is his man. It is through Thyra, whose jealousy leads her to betray the man whom she loves, that Gale finds out that the young man who has been paying attention to Nelly is also the murderer of his brother.

John's only friends are Nelly herself and Red Rube, the old deer-harborer, attracted by Garnet's skill and recklessness as horseman and sportsman, who saves John and his horse from the treacherous bogs of Exmoor and from death by knife at the hands of Parson Gale at the end of a long deer hunt. The hunt itself is perhaps

the most exhilarating scene in the book, one of the most exciting "runs" in the whole set of novels.

To save her lover, Nelly promises herself to Parson Gale if the Parson will allow him to go free. But when Gale brings Katerfelto to attend Nelly's dying father, he finds that Nelly has deceived him by seeing young Garnet (actually it was her farewell to him) and he determines upon vengeance. For help the Parson calls upon Fin Cooper, whom Thyra has promised to marry, and who is jealous of Thyra's interest in Garnet. Thyra overhears their plans and in remorse for her betrayal of the man she loves, speeds out over the snow, thinly clad, to warn Garnet. In a prolonged chase over the snow, Garnet escapes Gale when Katerfelto makes the jump over the ravine and the Parson fails, falling to his death on the rocks below. But Garnet's horse escapes him while he is dismounted, and he is left at the mercy of Fin Cooper who has come around the ravine. Thyra by a short cut has caught up with the chase, takes Garnet's boots, and makes a track into the gathering snow storm while Garnet seeks refuge in Red Rube's cottage. Hours later Fin Cooper, still in pursuit, comes upon Thyra frozen, and dead, in the snow. Garnet escapes to France where Nelly joins him.

## Section (7) Sister Louise. 1876.

With Katerfelto Whyte-Melville abandoned the elaborately constructed novel for a briefer and simpler form. Sister Louise and Rosine which follow it are also relatively brief and simple in structure. These two differ from some of the earlier romances by the fact that they are clearly related to the society novels and to the problems implicit in the society novels. Sister Louise concerns itself with morals, Rosine with politics. It is a reasonable supposition that the books represent the writer's response to the freer code for women already developing in the 1870's and to the growing power of the

middle class which endangered the semi-chivalric code of the English gentleman.

Actually, Sister Louise, a retelling of the popular story of Louise de la Valliere, mistress of Louis the XIV, is a "society novel" translated into costume and a remoter time and country. The admiration of gentlemanly manner, gallantry, and chivalry is more explicit, and the dandies of the British army become aristocrats at the French court, but there is the same preoccupation with the rhythm of estrangement and reconciliation between a man and woman becoming tired one of the other. (Usually this story is told of a married couple, here of a king and his mistress.) Louise must suffer and by some sacrifice or renunciation be purified as must women in the society novels. Mme. de Montespan differs but little from the unscrupulous social climbers of Whyte-Melville's London pictures.

There is some skill in the development of irony resulting from Louise's character. Her simple and uncalculating, complete and whole-hearted devotion to the King leads her into acts contrary to her natural modesty and shyness, acts which give the surface appearance of brazenness. Also, the whole-heartedness of her own devotion leads her to demand a similar response and is responsible for the almot petulant proprietary claims which she makes on the King, who gradually wearies of her continued

presence (at one point she even follows him to the front lines of a battle).

In structure the novel is carefully managed, arranged in three parts: Louise's conquest of the King; her life at the Court; her repentance in the convent. As as been true before, the historical novel is more skilfully plotted than the preceding or succeeding society novels.

Louise de la Valliere, innocent and unpracticed in the ways of the world and the court, becomes a maid in waiting with her friend Athenee de Mortemar (later Mme. de Montespan) and falls fatally in love with the King, who, attracted by her devotion, warm heart, and innocence, makes her his favorite. Her friend Athenee has plans of worldly success which lead her to reject the affection of Louise's brother, Henri, who as he rises in rank with his sister, becomes hardened and cynical, particularly after Athenee marries M. de Montespan. The Marquis de Bragelonne, who loves Louise, nearly compromises her by an indiscreet visit witnessed by the King who breaks him in rank. Bragelonne finally despairing of the world, enters a Trappist monastery. Louise herself is gradually supplanted by her brilliant, daring, and satirical friend, and heart broken, retires to a Carmelite convent where she spends the remaining days in repentance and saintly devotion, visited once by the remorseful Athenee who in turn has been supplanted by Mme. Scarren.

If in the preceding novels Whyte-Melville conforms to the shift in tone of society during the late 1860's and early 1870's, it is with reservations, and even his most witty and daring women are hardly emancipated from the conventions and must suffer and must sacrifice. Sister Louise reasserts the soundness of the old conception. Whyte-Melville is at considerable pains

to picture Louise as the victim of a single-heartedness of devotion.[12] Throughout the story she preserves a kind of innocence in the midst of the scheming worldliness of the court, and she is able with equal intensity to repent and turn her mind to God. Mme. de Montespan is the foil for Louise, but her story asserts the same scheme of values in another way. She is ambitious and worldly, but not so devoid of moral principle that she makes no effort to forestall the success which will also be disaster: she pleads with her husband to take her away from the court and away from temptation. She pays the price for her hardness: for she sacrifices nothing (Louise sacrificed all for the King): she suffers nothing except disappointment of worldly ambitions, rather she is the cause of suffering in Louise; and--the final penalty--she cannot repent at the end.

## Section (8) Rosine. 1877.

If Sister Louise reasserts the older Christian-chivalric conception of woman in the face of the late mid-Victorian trend toward emancipation, at least toward a less strict set of conventions, Rosine reasserts the older conception of government by the aristocracy in the face of the rise of the middle class. In Rosine, in fact, he is more explicitly conservative than in the earlier novels. (It is in the historical novels where his loyal-

ties will not obtrude so evidently that he is most explicit, for in the very next society novel he deals sympathetically with a girl from the middle class who marries into society.)

Rosine is a tale of the revolution, centering around the carelessness of Louis XVI, his unconcern about his own safety, and around the mobbing of Versailles after which the King and Queen are virtual prisoners in the hands of the citizenry. The leaders of the people are fanatically ambitious men and women or malicious malcontents in whose hands the people are merely tools. The King, and, especially, the Queen, are the victims of malicious slander and deliberate and unjust defamation (even within the court itself where the Duke of Orleans is a villain of the piece), genuinely fond of the people, suffering in mind and heart for them, and at the worst weak, vacillating and impractical. The courtiers who stand loyally by the King and Queen, especially the young Marquis de Favras and the Marquis de Vaucourt, are costume-play versions of the loyal Cavaliers of Holmby House or the gallant young dandies of the Peninsular Campaign.

In structure the story follows the tripartite scheme of Cerise, though on a much slighter scale, a method used for several of the later historical novels with fair success. The scene, and with very nearly the

whole cast of characters shifts from the country to the city and then again to the palace at Versailles.

At the invitation of Jacques Armand ("Coup-Tete"), a revolutionary, Rosine, a young peasant girl, and her lover, Pierre Legros, leave for Paris when the attentions of Count Arnold de Montarbas to Rosine place her future in danger, and when Pierre puts himself in jeopardy by driving off two of the Count's retainers from an unfair attack on the revolutionary (Pierre himself has no revolutionary sympathies). The parish priest, Fr. Ignatius, is also about to go to Paris, transferred there by the Church because of the increasing tenseness of the situation.

At Versailles, de Montarbas is snubbed by the Queen. In a huff he conceives the plan of joining the "citizens." In his first gesture he is saved from a mob by the Wolverine, handsome and fierce leader of the people, really Leonie Armand, sister of Coup-Tete. (Leonie bears a striking physical resemblance to the Queen.) In the Count, Leonie sees a useful ally. Before long she falls in love with him. (The Count is still enamored of Rosine, who is also under the Wolverine's protections, with Pierre. But the Count is not averse to another amour.)

Political and romantic intrigue develop simultaneously. The Count is completely cut off from Versailles when he is discovered cheating, and must fight a duel with de Vaucourt. Here the Wolverine helps him by sending de Vaucourt's second to the Bastille, having possession of a lettre de cachet. Also, disguised, she acts as the Count's second, striking de Vaucourt's sword up so that the Count can wound him, mortally as they think.

Further melodramatic scenes following, including an appearance of the Wolverine dressed in the ball costume to be worn by the Queen, and her open flirtation, so disguised, with the Count who makes his last court appearance there. (The scene convinces all present that the Queen is brazen and immodest.) There is also a mob scene in which the people riot and in which Pierre and Rosine are separated. Pierre finds himself under guard after he resists arrest while trying to find his sweetheart; Rosine takes temporary shelter with the fishwife, Mother Bouffon. (Here a bedroom scene is interposed in which the Count makes love, as he thinks, to Rosine,

actually to Leonie.)

Rosine overhears a plot to take Versailles and make the King and Queen prisoners, and hastens to the church where Fr. Ignatius is now priest. Fr. Ignatius sends her on to Versailles with a note of warning to the court. On the way she rejoins Pierre, still under guard and being taken in the same direction. When the mob starts for Versailles, the court is prepared, although it is too late to offer effective resistance. Fr. Ignatius is killed outright during the march in a noble attempt to turn back a misled people from rebellion, perhaps from regicide.

At Versailles the mob attacks the stairway to the palace, valiantly defended by de Vaucourt (who is killed) and his guard of aristocrats, aided by the brave and strong Pierre, who has been released. The mob is driven back temporarily, but the King and Queen prepare to leave for Paris, voluntary prisoners of their people, the Queen arranging first the escape of the two young peasant lovers to Austria. Outside the palace, Montarbas, of whom the citizens are envious, is accused by Leonie in a moment of passionate jealousy when she sees that Rosine's presence in the palace has nerved the Count to greater efforts. The popular leader Sauterre is only glad to try the Count for treason, and the contemptuous peer of France now meets his death defiantly and like a gentleman. Leonie in remorse throws herself across his body as the shots are fired and dies with him.

## Section (9) Roy's Wife. 1878.

With Roy's Wife Whyte-Melville returns to contemporary society after a series of three historical novels, and to the familiar scenes of the fox hunt, the country house dinner, the London season, and Rotten Row. In structure it splits sharply into two plots which cross one another very slightly. The sub-plot concerns the love of a young Naval officer, Collingwood Brail, hearty, full of common sense, and somewhat inclined to nautical slang,

for Miss Hester Bruce, one of the conventionally attractive heroines who move in good society. Only his own diffidence delays the success of his courtship. The main plot itself divides and after starting in one direction, turns in another, as several preceding novels have done. Early in the novel the main plot provides the nearest to effective satire of fashionable society to be found in Whyte-Melville. For manners and customs of the hunting set are seen through the eyes of a girl--a lady by nature but not by birth--who marries above her and is completely innocent of the ways of fashionable life.[13] Like Uncle John particularly, the novel shifts to a story of the wrongly-accused woman and descends to a series of coincidental complications. The attempt to adapt his theme to the increasingly middle class reader is evident in the plot, and exclamatory comments on natural gentility are put in the mouths of the most aristocratic of the *dramatis personae*, particularly Lord Fitzowen. Lady Jane, who canters comfortably in the Ride and knows her way among fashionable people is painted as a selfish and shallow woman. Also, for the first and only time, Whyte-Melville discusses divorce and pictures the proceedings necessary to collect adequate evidence.

John Roy, gentleman, on vacation at Beachmouth, falls in love with and proposes to Elinor Burton ("Nelly"), daughter of a government clerk and a governess. Although in education and natural gentility she is somewhat above

her occupation as helper at the boarding house of her Aunt Mathilda Phipps, she is entirely innocent of the ways of fashionable life.

Courtship and marriage are completed during out-of-season London so that serious problems do not arise until Mr. Roy is forced to entertain at his country-house. Then he finds it somewhat disagreeable to indoctrinate Nelly into the niceties of social protocol (to whom shall the hostess make the sign to leave the table at the end of dinner? why should not gray hairs be reverenced above rank? why is not an Irish peerage as good as an English baronetcy?). His difficulties are increased during the hunting scenes when Nelly's ignorance produces inappropriate sentiments, foolish questions, and venatical solecisms.

Among the new acquaintances are Miss Bruce, in whose carriage Nelly views a hunt, and Lord Fitzowen, a flirting dandy whose invincibility to all serious attacks of the heart makes him a constant favorite among the ladies. From the start Lord Fitzowen is Nelly's admirer. Soon an innocent familiarity develops, Lord Fitzowen promising to act as Nelly's mentor in fashionable society, or, as he puts it, her "dictionary." His frequent attendance upon Mrs. Roy excites Mr. Roy's jealousy when Mrs. Mopus the housekeeper drops hints about an impropriety in Nelly's conduct. Mrs. Mopus, the villainess of the story, has had undisciplined control of Mr. Roy's household for several years and has made a good thing of it. Nelly's practical training and her concern with the details of household management put a stop to this and aroused Mrs. Mopus' fears for her own position. When she overhears an unflattering description of herself during a conversation between Nelly and Lord Fitzowen, her last scruple goes.

Very few more scenes in which Mr. Roy's annoyance at Nelly's faux pas and at her intimacy with Lord Fitzowen working at cross purposes with her own sensitiveness and pride are needed to create an explosion. When Mr. Roy, contrite at hasty words (he had wished in Nelly's hearing that he had never married her), he finds Nelly gone. During his frantic and suspicious search he finds that Lord Fitzowen is sitting calmly at his club and obviously has had nothing to do with Nelly's disappearance. But his suspicions are turned to convictions by a letter in Nelly's jewel box (actually a letter forged by Mrs. Mopus) which incriminates her completely.

Now convinced of the vulgarity of his wife's character, Mr. Roy rebounds into the arms of Lady Jane de Banier, a young widow, who before her brief marriage had first encouraged and then rejected Mr. Roy (who had recuperated twirling lassoes in South America). He soon finds himself in a sad predicament, for Lady Jane is discontented with her ambiguous and compromising position and presses Mr. Roy to get a divorce, with all the righteousness and martyrdom of a woman who has compromised herself for the sake of a man. Despite the letter in Mrs. Roy's handwriting and bearing her signature, containing as the lawyer drily remarks somewhat greater number of compromising statements than is usual in such a brief document, the divorce must depend on more substantial evidence. Mr. Roy employs private detectives to watch his wife, but they are able to find little that will compromise her, for her relations with Lord Fitzowen consist chiefly of refusals to permit further attentions. As the season wears on, Mr. Roy finds his relationship with Lady Jane more and more that between a quarrelsome husband and wife.

Nelly is back with her Aunt at the boarding house. Collingwood Brail, who boards there, has long been her friend. Now he meets Mr. Roy through Miss Bruce. Convinced that there is a misunderstanding somewhere, the honest sailor determines to help and starts Mr. Roy thinking when he tells him bluntly that he must be wrong. Light begins to break at an accidental meeting in Hampton Court, where Collingwood Brail has taken Nelly and her Aunt for a day's outing, and where Mr. Roy, Lady Jane, and a party come for a lark before going on to the more fashionable Richmond for dinner. In the company of Brail, Mr. Roy overhears Nelly refuse the proposal of marriage which Lord Fitzowen makes to Nelly. Mr. Roy now appeals to Brail for help. Brail does sleuthing of his own, discovers that the notepaper on which Nelly's incriminating missive was written, did not arrive at Mr. Roy's until Nelly had left, and that Mrs. Mopus' accounts are forged. The two now encourage one another to persevere in their suits, Lt. Brail wins his Miss Bruce, and Mr. Roy regains his wife.

### Section (10) Riding Recollections. 1878.

For the reader of Whyte-Melville's novels who is unfamiliar with horsemanship and with hunting, the

novelist provides his own guide in Riding Recollections.[14] For the literary historian the book is a disappointment, containing few personal references and no autobiographical detail. So self-effacing is the writer that, at first reading, the book seems to be no more than what it purports to be, a manual of harsemanship and the technique of hunting, discussing such paired topics as "Kindness" and "Coercion" (chapters i and ii); "The Use of the Bridle" and "The Abuse of the Spur" (chapters iii and iv); "Hand" and "Seat" (chapters v and vi); "Valour" and "Discretion" chapters vii and viii); "Irish Hunters" and "Thorough-Bred Horses" (chapters ix and x); "Riding to Fox-Hounds" and "Riding at Stag-Hounds" (chapters xi and xii); and "The Provinces" and "The Shires" (chapters xiii and xiv). Actually the book is more than this, for the nature of the writer emerges as clearly and probably more accurately than in the self-conscious and somewhat strained essays of Bones and I. It is apparent in the modesty of personal statement, generosity and sympathy in attitude toward other views and interests than his own. It is apparent too in his attitude toward the horse, who may be a brute and need firm coercion but is most himself when he is a companion. And it is apparent in his attitude toward the skill of horsemanship itself, which becomes in his eyes not so entirely a technique as it does a self-discipline and a harmony of personal character.

A brief set of quotations illustrate this attitude. What one may suppose is his ideal for himself is set forth in words to the reader in the "Author's Preface":

> If the few hints he can offer should prove serviceable to the beginner he [the writer] will feel amply rewarded, and will only ask to be kindly remembered hereafter in the hour of triumph when the tyro of the riding-school has become the pride of a hunting-field--judicious, cool, daring, and skilful, light of hand, firm of seat, thoroughly at home in the saddle, a very Centaur--
>
> "Encorpsed and demi-natured
> With the brave beast."[15]

When he discusses what constitutes a "hand" in a horseman he asks

> What is it? Intellect, nerve, sympathy, confidence, skill? None of these can be said to constitute this quality; rather it is a combination of all with something superinduced that can only be called a magnetic affinity between the agressive spirit of man and the ductile nature of the beast.[16]

Similarly when discussing "Kindness" and "Coercion" he conceives of the solution as a balance, one not only of physical skill but of character:

> It is only by exertion of a skill that is the embodiment of thought in action, by application of a science founded on reason, experience, and analogy, that we can approach perfection in our noble four-footed friend. Common-sense will do much, kindness more, coercion very little, yet we are not to forget that man is the master; that the hand, however light, must be strong, the heel, however lively, must be resolute; and that when persuasion, best of all inducements, seems to fail, we must not shrink from the timely application of force.[17]

In style Riding Recollections is superior to most of the novels, straightforward and unaffected. Descriptions of riding he has seen and of a few long runs make the book an anthology of the kind of hunting passage which were to many of his contemporaries the appealing aspect of his novels.

## Section (11) Black but Comely. 1879.

In Black but Comely,[18] a long novel and Whyte-Melville's last, the writer collects within two covers nearly all the characters and situations of his later novels and some from the earlier novels, in the picaresque story of Jane Lee, a gypsy Becky Sharp, though unlike Thackeray's character she repents and turns over a new leaf at the end of the book. More like Digby Grand in structure and at times even in tone,[19] the book is chaotic in pattern and endless in incident, showing even fewer of the lessons the novelist has learned about structure through his historical novels than Roy's Wife.

Jane Lee, a gipsy girl, is rescued when her mother is crushed to death in a mob watching a public hanging, by Jack Lopez, a Jew, who adopts the baby. The main story begins when Jack dies. He has educated Jane to be a shrewd, self-reliant girl, attractive by nature in face and figure, and possessor of an unusually beautiful voice. At the time of Jack's death, Jane is living with the Rev. Silas Tregarthen and his wife in Somersetshire, where Jane has been sent for a change of surroundings and for further education after finishing at Miss Quilter's school for girls.

During her stay at the Tregarthens, Jane has already attracted two of the men who are central to her career: Mervyn Strange, an ascetic high church clergyman, curate to Mr. Tregarthen, who has so far wandered from his self-imposed celibacy to name Jane Lee, tenderly, his "Beltenebrosa"; and James Paravant, owner of Combe-Wester, simple, awkward, and farmerish (Jane translates his name "Forward James" and the new name sticks). When news of the death of Jane's father arrives, the Tregarthens, not unaware that Jane may come into possession of an inheritance, determines to protect her from the world in which she is now alone. Mr. Tregarthen has an inconvenient attack of the gout, and so they send Mervyn Strange with her to London to make certain of her return.

Once in London, Jane determines to make her own way, and begins a series of ventures which the rest of the novel recounts. Her first step is to borrow five hundred pounds from Mervyn, simultaneously accepting the proposal of marriage to which the cleric's infatuation drives him. Then she disappears without trace, leaving the curate to return to Somersetshire without his charge. Her first sequence of adventures after she sets herself up fashionably includes a failure to make a start on the stage. For Mr. Delapre, the actor-manager, to whom she goes in the role of a fashionable woman seeking diversion, has extra-theatrical plans for the handsome dark beauty with which she does not fall in.

Her next sequence of adventures begins when she is held up in the Park by a gypsy, Jericho Lee, who recognizes the initials tattooed on her arm and claims her as Shuri Lee's lost child. (Jack Lopez had given her the name Jane Lee to fit the initials on her arm; this turns out actually to be her name.) Jane goes with Jericho to the gypsy camp and meets Fighting Jack, "patron" of the camp, her father, and on occasion a boxer. Although treated with honor, she finds herself virtually a prisoner. Jericho, further, warns her of the fate of gypsy girls who leave their own folk for the gorgios. Jericho himself falls under the spell of her dark beauty (only a gypsy, he says, could be "so black and so comely"), and when Jane promises to give him an "answer" in a year and a day, he arranges for her to accompany him to the Swansdowne races and to try "duke ring" (fortune-telling) on her own.

Only one such opportunity is what the resourceful adventuress needs. When she recognizes in one of the gentleman jockeys her former acquaintance, "Forward"

James, she manages to speak to him, and arrange a meeting. After throwing Jericho in a hand to hand struggle, Forward James gallops off with her on the same Potboy which he rode in the steeple-chase not long before. Jane puts up in Boarshaven, and soon gives in to Forward James' importunities and consents to be his wife. The clergyman whom they find to perform the hasty marriage is the same man whom Jane had once promised to marry and from whom she had taken five hundred pounds--Mervyn Strange.

After a Mediterranean honeymoon, Jane brings her husband back to England, but to London, not Somersetshire, where she attempts to break into the fashionable world. (Her cards read "Madame Paravant, nee Beltenebrosa.") One of her first conquests is Lord St. Moritz, middle-aged roue and experienced man of the world. Among the fashionable set, the older Lady Goneril, Lord St. Moritz' recently discarded mistress, and the younger Mrs. Stripwell, his current mistress,are important, and Lord St. Moritz plays one against the other in order to get Bel the needed invitations which provide her with an entree and establish her position.

Jane's London season is not wholly smooth, however. When she and James attend the Ascot races as Lord St. Moritz's guests, gossip about her intimacy with the nobleman increases. The gypsies are also at the races, and Jericho blackmails her. At the same race she has to snub Mr. Delapre and pretends not to know him. Lord St. Moritz observes the incident, visits Mr. Delapre later, and finds out enough to feel confident in pursuing a woman as bold as Jane apparently has been, particularly since Jane has just borrowed a hundred pounds from him and has won on the races by following his advice. James himself has lost heavily, and his moderate income is already strained by the extravagant life which Jane has led them into.

Forward James, having gone to further expenditures to rebuild Combe-Wester, acts as host to their London acquaintances for the Swansdowne races in which he plans once more to ride Potboy, in an effort to recoup his fortunes. (Much against their will, the shocked Tregarthens accept Jane when Mrs. Tregarthen finds that Rose Erith, the Marchioness, has called upon Jane.) At Combe-Wester matters reach a climax. James resents the increasingly obvious attentions which Lord St. Moritz pays Jane. When Jane (actually afraid of meeting her gypsy kin) plans to stay home from the races, James takes it as a preparation for an assignation with Lord St. Moritz who has also announced his intention of staying away. James forces a scene on the morning of the race and leaves in a reckless mood.

Jane's foreboding of evil to come makes her risk appearing at the races. All vehicles have gone, and she has to follow on foot, arriving in time to see James, riding recklessly, spilled from Potboy and fatally injured. James lingers on for two days and speaks to the contrite Jane before he dies. When the estate is settled, Jane does not have enough--so extravagant have they been--even to send Mervyn Strange the five hundred pounds which she owes him, a debt which has weighed upon her mind.

Two more sequences of scenes complete the novel, the first in London, the second in Boarshaven. Now living in London, Jane Lee has been dropped by Lord St. Moritz, for she is free to marry again and St. Moritz's intentions stop short of marriage. But when he meets her at the play ("Gypsy John; or, the Romany's Revenge," the result of Mr. Delapre's acquaintance with Jericho at the Ascot races), he offers to take her home. Jane accepts the offer, but once in the cab must repel his ungallant advances. Unexpected help comes from the cab driver, who knocks Lord St. Moritz down for molesting "his little daughter." It is Fighting Jack, finally out of jail, having been taken by the police in a brawl at the Swansdowne races at the same time that Jane was running away with Forward James. The gypsy tribe is broken up and scattered; Jack himself is ailing and has become a drunkard. Jane Lee now devotes herself to taking care of her father. But finally the strain of caring for him and of keeping Kericho at a distance, wears her down. When they have drained her purse completely, she uses her last resources to purchase a ticket to Boarshaven. (Fighting Jack dies shortly after, following a drunken evening, in the Park.)

At Boarshaven, Jane seeks out Mervyn Strange, coming to him, she says, for counsel from a man of God. Accepting her repentance solely as a man of God--somewhat to Jane's disappointment--he sets her to work in the hospital, where she finds new and better uses for her beauty and where she proves her changed heart. Among the patients whom she nurses back to life is Nance, the gypsy girl who had waited on her during the short period when she was with the tribe.

Jane is not entirely through with fashionable society. At prize day she supplies for the school mistress and meets Lord St. Moritz, who is visiting the Marchioness, Rose Erith, who presides that day over the awards. She snubs St. Moritz, but Mervyn watching at a distance blames her for flirting, as he thinks, with the aging roue. (Though the Marchioness is sympathetic, when

Lord St. Moritz denies any intention of marrying Jane--though he had never been nearer to doing so--the Marchioness decides to drop Jane completely.) Her last tie to society cut, Jane decides to leave, for Mervyn has given no sign that Jane is more to him than a competent nurse. Mervyn gives her the written recommendation which she asks for.

But her departure is forestalled by Nance, the gypsy girl, who tells her that Jericho has traced her to Boarshaven, and that Jericho and Nance's husband plan to waylay Mervyn Strange after church that night. Jane hastens to the church to warn him. But when the service is over, she misses him, for he has left by another entrance hoping to find Jane and have a last word with her. Jane hastens after and arrives too late to prevent the robbery, but in time to take Jericho's knife in her own breast. Now it is Mervyn's turn to be repentant, but it is not too late, for Jane recovers, and they are reconciled. (Mervyn has modified several of his high church conceptions, among them, the ideal of the celibate priesthood.)

## Section (12). Further Remarks on Style.

An illuminating divergence of judgment concerning Whyte-Melville's style separates the critics of the old school (Ellis and Maxwell, for example) and the later critics (Sadleir and Pryce-Jones, for example). The former, although recognizing a lack of originality in Whyte-Melville's writings,[20] praise the style. The latter are particularly sensitive to its triteness and banality. Certainly the latter are correct, and after a succession of dull passages the modern reader must agree with Sadleir in calling Whyte-Melville the "well-spring of the cliche." But the divergence between the two groups indicates that a number of mannerisms which are most depressing for the

modern reader were regarded by Whyte-Melville's readers as virtues, and that an energetic analysis of his defects would be a waste of energy.[21]

Thackeray was quite clearly Whyte-Melville's model in many passages.[22] In this Whyte-Melville made an unfortunate choice, for the manner which he copied accentuated his natural bias toward dull general reflections upon life, put together in essay-like passages many of which could be excerpted from the novels without damage to continuity of action or to characterization. "Mankind, I believe, after all, are very much alike"[23] is a representative introduction to these digressions, and the tritenesses of the essays Bones and I are easily located examples of this form of comment.[24] This pervasive banality, which in the moral essays can only convince the reader of banality of thought as well, extends to narrative and descriptive passages, too[25]--for example, the description of the rrewed hope of Lord Bearwarden when he meets Maud, or the country-side described in The Brookes of Bridlemere. Banality is intensified by an apparent insensitiveness which produces unintentional bathos of style.[26] particularly when he shifts suddenly from the elevated to the prosiac. (For example, the final paragraphs of Chapter xii and the opening paragraph of Chapter xiii of The Gladiators in which after a description of Valeria's voluptuous preparation for the arrival of Esca, the writer

interrupts the scene at the very moment of climax to pursue a moral reflection which includes such phrases as "the stone that has once been set in motion, is pretty sure to reach the bottom of the hill at last." Or the final paragraph of Chapter xiv in the same work, in which after a description of the rich banquet at the Emperor's palace, the novelist pauses before continuing an account of the drinking and conversation to explain that "we must remember that it was the pure and unadulterated juice of the grape, that it was in general freely mixed with water, and that they thus imbibed but a very small portion of alcohol, which is reality the destructive quality of all stimulants, to the welfare of the stomach and the brain.") Repetition of favorite phrases,[27] often proverbial or allusive,[28] increases still further the effect of triteness,[29] and he besprinkles the pages with Latin tags appealing to that "decent and honest reverence for classical learning which all English gentlemen feel" that Thackeray, who is addicted to such decorations himself, remarks in Rawdon Crawley.[30] To the Latin he adds occasional phrases of French (_couleur de rose_ is one of his favorites[31]--a Victorian habit rather than a personal affectation, apparently, judging from the appearance of the phrase in other novelists; but that Whyte-Melville was conscious of it is amusingly indicated by the fact that when he uses it of a _French_ character, he translates it into

English).[32] (The opening paragraph of *General Bounce*, Chapter xii, provides a convenient illustration of these decorations. The passage is an essay on the speed and hurry of modern life [sic]. "In the good old times, when railways were not, and the *ne plus ultra* of speed was, after all, but ten miles an hour." "The unities. . .the observance of which effectually prevented. . . many a *deus ex machina*." "When Puck undertook to girdle the earth in forty minutes, it was no doubt a sporting offer, not that Oberon seems to have been man enough to book it; but we, who back Electra, should vote such a forty minutes dead slow." "We . . .are married, divorced, robbed, ruined, and enriched, all ventre a terre.") Direct address, to the characters in the story ("Gilbert! Gilbert! Will you take no warning?")[33] or to the reader ("Do not judge her harshly" introducing a passage which develops to a climax which includes "Excelsior! Fight on, fight upwards")[34] adds to the embarrassment of the modern reader.

But although such habits persist throughout the series, there is some improvement as the series of novels develops, and these mannerisms are somewhat more evident in the early than in the late novels, a fact presumably due to changes in popular taste (compare, for example, the styles of *Lady Audley's Secret* or *Under Two Flags*). Vindication of Whyte-Melville as a stylist, however, cannot be

based upon such a relative progress, but rather upon another approach. One modern critic remarks that "among the cliches of a hopelessly unambitious prose a sudden glow touches the page. A hunting landscape is enough to light the flame; the intrusion of human relations on the simple world of horses in winter is regularly enough to put it out again."[35] Good for Nothing, which offers perhaps a more complete collection of all the faults of the novelist than any other single volume, provides an example. Gilbert Orme recovered from his fever but weakened by a corroding pessimism has been the center of melancholy attention and the subject of harrowing passages of comment, which should be quoted for the effect of a following hunting scene which suddenly but briefly freshens the pages:

> How the stable-boy in the rear, ordered out on a young horse for the purpose of making the wilder conveys, scampered hither and thither! Not doing much in the way of observation, certainly, but finishing countless imaginary Derbys and St. Legers, with his hands down, his feet rammed home in the stirrups, to his own boundless satisfaction, and the general agitation and discomfiture of the young horse. How another assistant, following with beer, made repeated applications to that fluid, till his face shone rubicund under the influence of its own innate health, combined with a mild stage of intoxication, and exposed to a broiling sun! How John Gordon walked untiring, with his iron muscles and his indefatigable stride, and rarely missed and never smiled; how Gilbert, with his light springy step, and a certain grace of gesture which never left him, reminded me of the Gilbert of old times; and lastly, how cheery and gladsome was Holyhead's manly face as he sprang over the fence into the lane, and announced his delight at our arrival.[36]

For a few books more can be said, particularly, once again, *Kate Coventry*, *Market Harborough*, *Inside the Bar*, and *Satanella*. Just as these are superior structurally because they develop coherently the single problem of one character (or in *Satanella* two characters) so they are superior in style to the others because the focusing of attention turns Whyte-Melville from a manner of expression which is personal to the "narrator" (in the first person in some novels) to one more dramatically appropriate to the central character.[37] The result, if not distinguished, is at least more happily clear of the worst mannerisms which appear in the other novels. With two of these particularly, *Market Harborough* and *Inside the Bar*, may be placed, for another reason, *Riding Recollections*. When writing objectively about sport, Whyte-Melville is frequently capable of vigorous and clean writing. *Riding Recollections*, furthermore, though in the first person, is restrained and unrhetorical, and successful not only in its basically expository purpose but in revealing a personality confident in his knowledge about his subject, modest in his attitude and generous, and quietly responsive to human undertones and overtones to an activity which on the surface is one chiefly of physical skill.[38]

Footnotes CHAPTER VI

1. "Or Similia Similibus Curantur." The homeopathic subtitle is explained by the successive love of affairs Dick has with the two sisters.

2. Pp. 19-20

3. The two painters whom Whyte-Melville mentions continually in the novels are Grant and Landseer. In Bones and I, p. 329, he speaks of Landseer's painting "of clowns and elves and stars and flowers grouped around Titania in Fairyland," a picture which the painting in the novel, perhaps, is patterned after.

4. Baker (History of the English Novel, VII, 117) quite correctly joins Sarchedon with The Gladiators as a novel "in the opulent manner of The Last Days of Pompeii. Pryce-Jones calls it "a study in Wardour Street Egyptian dynasty." Sadleir (Excursions, 187) also applies the epthet "Wardour Street."

5. Satanella is the nickname given to Blanche Douglas and is also the name of a horse, which Daisy Walters names after Blanche. Blanche had first been nicknamed "Black Douglas." Compare Ouida, Under Two Flags in which Bertie's horse is nicknamed "Black Douglas." Under Two Flags was published 1867; Satanella in 1872. If Whyte-Melville caught himself in a minor plagiarism, he escaped by self-plagiarism, for the name appears in The Interpreter, Chap. xxxviii.

6. For a possible connection with Smart's Breezie Langton, see above, Chap. iv, note 38. This is not the only novel in which incidents are repeated from earlier novels. There are two kinds of repetition: repetitions in a sequence of novels which grow one out of the preceding one (see comparison of General Bounce and Good for Nothing, for example, and of this sequence, Contraband, Satanella, and Uncle John); repetitions which are simply random repetitions through carelessness. A partial list of such repetitions: Black but Comely and Cerise, the wedding at which the priest marries the girl whom he loves; Cerise and Contraband, the lost child identified by the mark on the neck; Cerise and Katerfelto, the leap to death; General Bounce and M. or N., the country-house breaking; The Interpreter, Rosine, and Sister Louise, mistaken identity at the costume ball; Katerfelto and The Interpreter, the long walk of the gypsy to save the giorgio. If less precise parallels were insisted upon the list could be extended indefinitely (the anonymous

letters in General Bounce, M. or N., Satanella, and Contraband; the situation by which an adventurer attempts to buy his victim's daughter in The Interpreter, Contraband, and The Brookes of Bridlemere; nursing scenes in Contraband, Uncle John, and Black but Comely; and so on).

7. The scene in which the young cornet is saved from being cheated at cards.

8. The situation of the young woman who plays the piano to tip off her card-sharp husband (father in Tilbury Nogo), and who later marries a country clergyman and then deserts him.

9. The situation of the woman who starts a new life thinking her husband dead only to sacrifice herself to duty when her husband returns.

10. Also Aunt Emily's character (and history) is much like that of Lady Olivia in The White Rose.

11. Hugh Walpole and Michael Sadleir, for example; see above, Chapter iv, Note 51. Baker (History of the English Novel, VIII, 118) calls it a "rousing story (such as Lytton could never tell)" and "his best historical novel and pherhaps the finest thing he ever did." Times Literary Supplement (16 June 1921, p. 377) places it among the novels of Whyte-Melville which came next to the novels of Sir Walter Scott on the shelf of books permitted the grandchildren of Whyte-Melville's contemporaries, Elwin (work cited, p. 286) says that it "still shares pride of place with Lorna Doone and Westward Ho on railway bookstalls in the West Country, on account of its setting in the wild Exmoor scenery and its epic description of the stag-hunt ending sensationally at Watersmeet" (cp. Wagenknecht, work cited, p. 575, "Katerfelto. . . is said to be as popular in the Exmoor country as Lorna Doone."). It was one of the four novels by Whyte-Melville reprinted 1933 in the Tavistock Library edition. It is significant that the two most popular historical novels, Holmby House and Katerfelto, were both novels which had special local appeal (Northamptonshire in Holmby House and Exmoor in Katerfelto. In the other novels the countryside itself appears most frequently as a backdrop for the hunting scenes, and there are relatively few of the fresh and loving pictures which appear in the novels of the two Kingsleys. Baker (History of the English Novel, VII, 233) believes that Katerfelto "almost captures the poetic charm of the Kingsleys' description of the moor, spinney, and the chase."

12. The earlier Mary of Scotland is similarly the victim of her own charms.

13. Possibly suggested by the situation of Sister Louise.

14. Elwin (work cited, p. 286) probably makes too high a claim--considering the vast literature of the hunt--when he calls it "the classic handbook of horsemanship, a practical work of instruction by a man who loved animals and studied horses with the same consideration as humans," but it is impossible for one who is ignorant of the technical literature of the period to judge this accurately.

15. Riding Recollections, p. xxvi.

16. The same work, p. 68.

17. The same work, p. 31.

18. Baker (History of the English Novel, VII, 234) has it Black and Comely.

19. The similarity between this last novel by Whyte-Melville and the first one he wrote is interesting, for it highlights the contrast, significant of what has been happening as far as the reading public is concerned during his career: the earliest is a wholly masculine production, clearly for men, the latest is just as clearly written for a reading public dominantly feminine.

20. For example, Maxwell, Introduction to Riding Recollections, p. xii. Also the anonymous writer in Times Literary Supplement 16 June 1921, who speaks of it as "quiet easy writing that may be likened to smoking-room conversation tinctured with culture" (i.e., gentlemanly).

21. Some of the passages quoted throughout the dissertation have been selected for the additional purpose of illustrating Whyte-Melville's style in the course of discussion of other matters.

22. See discussion of Thackeray, Chap. xvii, Sec. 2, below for further comment.

23. Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 11. Or "There are two periods of life when ..." (Uncle John, p. 31), and so on.

24. Maxwell, (Introduction to Riding Collections, pp. xvi-xvii) selects the dull chapter on "Gourds" in Bones and I as "characteristic of his style." Maxwell's intention is one of praise.

25. The chief exception being the hunting scenes. The scene in The Brookes of Bridlemere of the Emir's review attended by Col. Brooke, a scene which Ellis praises highly (Victorian Novelists, pp. 201-202) is typical of Whyte-Melville's historical novels rather than of the society novels, and illustrates the novelist's handling of massed effect and pageantry. While this type of scene is managed by Whyte-Melville with some success, it is nevertheless heavy and somewhat artificial. Ellis also finds in Holmby House "exquisite little pen pictures of the rich country-side of stately Althorp and Boughton." The present writer does not have this response, and it may be that Ellis knew the countryside and added to Whyte-Melville's pictures from his own memory. Still Baker, too (History of the English Novel, VII, 234) found that scenes in Katerfelto were deserving of comparison with scenes from the novels of the Kingsleys, and it may be that the present writer's response to such scenes is a dull one, though he finds no difficulty in responding to such scenes in Charles or Henry Kingsley.

26. For other examples, see General Bounce, p. 60, Good for Nothing, p. 192, or Uncle John, pp. 428-429. There are many others to be found. Bones and I, p. 225, for example: "Why is love like a tea-pot? Because it is all on one side." This one example, however, should perhaps remind the reader to be grateful that Whyte-Melville does not indulge in the Victorian liking for the conundrum for which the country house party conversations in Smart's novels provide adequate evidence (in addition to such puns as "I'd rather mill-you-I-hate than be humiliated," if this is properly a pun).

27. Whyte-Melville's habit of repetition is also evident in repetition of types of characters, and of situations. Another very confusing habit of repetition is his repetition of proper names. This does not mean a carrying over of the same minor characters from one novel to another (as in Thackeray, for example), but is a result apparently of sheer indifference, for characters with the same names have not necessary similarity or relationship. Examples: Bella Stoney in The Brookes of Bridlemere and Bella Jones in Good for Nothing; Miss Bruce in M. or N., and in Roy's Wife; Cotherstone in Tilbury Nogo and The

White Rose; Miss Douglas in The White Rose and Satanella; Dubbs in Digby Grand and Black but Comely; Goldthred in M. or N. and Contraband; Justine the maid, in Cerise and Sister Louise; Kate Carmine in The White Rose and the Carmine girls and Kate Cremorne in Contraband; Mexico in Market Harborough and The Brookes of Bridlemere; Nobs in The White Rose and Good for Nothing; and others. Sometimes the name belongs to a male character in one book to a female character in another (Goldthred, Mexico), sometimes to an important name in one book, an insignificant character in another (Cotherstone, Rosine--the heroine of the novel and also Blanche's maid in General Bounce). "Slasher" is used as a nickname for the dashing Miss Merlin in Inside the Bar and in two other novels (The White Rose and Uncle John) for quite disreputable characters. Not all these similarities come close together in time, and it is quite likely that readers coming to each novel as it was published would not have been so easily confused.

28. Perhaps epigrammatic, too. Lewis (Victorian Novelists, p. 200) quotes the following as an example of Whyte-Melville's mastery of epigram: "To judge by his own account, no man ever misses a meet save by a concatenation of circumstances totally unprecedented." This praise like other praise of Whyte-Melville by writers of an older school indicates the fashions by which Whyte-Melville made his appeal. Wit, however, was not Whyte-Melville's forte. Contraband, p. 210, provides an example of an attempt to reproduce witty conversation, an attempt which falls flat, from a distance of eighty years at any rate. Whyte-Melville's phrase, put in the mouth of Count Tourbillon in The White Rose (p. 322) when the Count speaks of the necessity of disillusionment if there are to be illusions and calls this the "equipoise of existence," comes nearer to the neat phrase, perhaps.

29. For example, when he must speak of far off corners of the world, it is Kamschatka which attracts him (Kate Coventry, p. 72, Rosine, p. 214, Roy's Wife, p. 357). When two women in society oppose one another, they fight an undeclared "war to the knife" (M. or N., p. 182, Contraband, p. 247, Sister Louise, p. 158, The White Rose, p. 261.) One of the most trite of allusions in Whyte-Melville, that of the earthen pot and the iron pot going down stream together, is the basis of a passage selected by Lewis (Victorian Novelists, pp. 202-203) for favorable comment as an example of Whyte-Melville's occasional inculcation of a moral "always quite simple" (he means this to be praise).

## Footnotes Chapter VI (Continued)

30. *Vanity Fair*, Chap. lii.

31. *General Bounce*, p. 291; *Tilbury Nogo*, p. 19; *Market Harborough*, p. 189; *Satanella*, p. 323; *Uncle John*, p. 170. Other favorite French phrases are *il faute se faire valoir* and *ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute*.

32. *Rosine*, p. 364.

33. *Good for Nothing*, p. 96.

34. *The White Rose*, p. 340.

35. Pryce-Jones.

36. *Good for Nothing*, p. 313.

37. *Kate Coventry* is in the form of a journal, and the demands of the story forced a kind of coy self-deception upon Kate (resulting in such locutions as "Could it be that . . .?" or "I couldn't think why . . .). The epistolary method is used sparingly but occasionally, as in *Uncle John* (chap. i) and in *Roy's Wife* (pp. 18 ff.) to introduce several characters at the beginning, a particular form of the epistolary method used by Whyte-Melville's master, Thackeray (the opening chapters of *The Newcomes*, for instance).

38. The historical novels on the whole are more successful than the society novels in consistency of style and in the avoidance of mannerisms.

# CHAPTER VII

# THE GENTLEMAN

## Section (1) The Problem

Whyte-Melville's preoccupation with the concept of the gentleman and with Christian-chivalric values, basic to his attitude throughout the novels, was part of a general preoccupation with the same problem during the Victorian period. For during the years when Whyte-Melville wrote, the stability which supported the traditional values was threatened. This stability was that of a social class, "the 'landed gentry of England with its outposts in the English Civil Service, Established Church, Army, and Public School,' a caste which had a real and legal monopoly of political control over all English life until its decline in the years between 1845 and 1867." Newman's famous definition of a gentleman was but "a part of a long Victorian effort to clarify a social type."[2]

> By the middle of the nineteenth century the industrial revolution had so altered or obliterated the boundary lines between the upper and middle classes that definitions were in urgent demand. The newly born powerful middle class aspired to the manners of the well-born, and refused to be enslaved by their commercial prosperity. They determined to keep alive that eighteenth-century tradition which Newman knew so well; that aristocracy of morals and manners, that cult of self-possession and self-respect, which Shaftesbury had represented; at least that "surface Christianity" which was Scott's definition of good breeding. They added, of

> course, the strengthening ingredients of middle-class piety, frugality, self-control, patriotism, and puritan devotion to work. By the early 1850's, this effort had resulted in the discreet moralization of the "gentleman," even if, and sometimes because, he had taken up his career in business. The Victorian gentleman might be a merchant, but he sought endlessly to immunize himself from modern, over-crowded, mechanized civilization; he set up his "gentlemanly" ideals as a counterpoise to the industrial revolution which had brought him into being. He cultivated his ideal also as a moral defense against "the stern avatar of democracy." And his final aim was to live the life of a man of good ancestry, good manners, good fortune, and leisurely accomplishments.[3]

The process of the "discreet moralization of the 'gentleman'" is evident in Whyte-Melville's novels. Already present in the beginning, it becomes clearer as the novelist develops. His next to last novel, Roy's Wife, for example, is filled with comment on true gentility and the vulgarity of fashionable affectation. But Whyte-Melville's responses to this democratization of the "gentleman" are somewhat uncomfortable, and in the two novels preceding Roy's Wife (Sister Louise and Rosine) his nostalgia for Cavalier and aristocratic ideals is even more explicit than in the earliest novels. Throughout his books the "gentleman" is closely related to the "Englishman," "officer," "sportsman," and, even, the "dandy," and related as well to an idealization of the chivalric "knight" and the Stuart (and Bourbon) "cavalier." His most elaborate definition occurs in General Bounce. The brief and somewhat apologetic self-defense at the very

end of the definition indicates the existence of some uncertainty about the reception of his view.

> To our own fancy, a gentleman is courteous, kindly, brave, and high-principled--considerate towards the weak, and self-possessed amongst the strong. High-minded and unselfish, he does to others as he would they should do unto him, and shrinks from the meanness of taking advantage of his neighbour, man or woman, friend or foe, as he would from the contamination of cowardice, duplicity, tyranny, or any other blackguardism. Sans peur et sans reproche--he has a lion's courage with a woman's heart; and such a one, be he in a peer's robes or a plough-smock--backing before his sovereign or delving for his bread--we deem a very Bayard for chivalry--a very Chesterfield for good breeding and good sense. We are old-fashioned though in our ideas, and doubtless our sentiments may be dubbed slow by the young, and vulgar by the great.[4]

## Section (2) The Cavalier Tradition.

Whyte-Melville's nostalgia for the Cavalier tradition is part of another development of the Nineteenth Century,[5] including the "Oxford" or "Anglo-Catholic" movement which looked back upon the Laudian church of the Seventeenth Century as the golden age of Anglicanism, and to the Stuarts as the Lord's own annointed. But although the Cavalier and High Church traditions are almost inseparable, especially among Scotsmen,[6] Whyte-Melville's own loyalty is to the courtly tradition of knight and cavalier rather than to the "Anglo-Catholic" tradition,[7] and he is attracted by a generous and whole-hearted loyalty to a "lost cause." Passing references to Cavalier history and

tradition show his interest. In General Bounce he finds it a pleasant thing to say about Blanche that she was a staunch little Cavalier and to have her, seeking for ways in which to describe her cousin Charles as a hero, choose Prince Rupert /known in his time as the "Mad Cavalier"7, Claverhouse /nicknamed in his time "Bloody Claverhouse"7,[8] and Bonnie Prince Charlie. Throughout the novels there are anecdotes of the Seventeenth Century and of the Cavaliers, usually connected with the history of a country house and including a duel and a tragic love tale of some young Cavalier blood.[9] (This particular habit does not provide evidence of a Cavalier bias, of course, for history, particularly the history of the civil war of the Seventeenth Century, probably attaches some such tale to nearly every country house in England, especially because many of the hereditary titles were baronetcies scattered prodigally by the Stuarts. Old country squires who traced their lineage back to the Conquest frequently looked with somewhat churlish contempt upon the more fashionable upstarts.)[10]

Whyte-Melville's interest in this tradition extended to other countries. In The Interpreter it is not the people-patriots whom Whyte-Melville writes of, but the Hungarian aristocracy still holding out against the more middle class Austrian tyranny. In the French novel of the revolution, it is not the people, again, but the young

courtiers loyal to the King and Queen and willing to give their lives to the defense of misunderstood and slandered Bourbon royalty, who receive his praise.[11] And more than once he quotes the Duke of Wellington's praise of the young dandies who officered his army on the Peninsular. Holmby House provides a characteristic passage:

> Ah, we may prate as we will of the prestige of success; we may talk of the smile of prosperity, the favouring gale of fortune. It is pleasantest, no doubt, and easiest, too, to ride a winning race; but if we want to see examples of unflinching endurance, brilliant heroism, and superhuman devotion, we must look for them amongst the partisans of a sinking cause--amongst the Bonapartists of 1814; amongst the Royalist of the Revolution; amongst the adherents of weak, chivalrous, misguided Prince Charlie, and amongst the loyal gentlemen who closed their ranks around his ill-fated ancestor, who grudged not to lavish their treasure and their blood in support of a principle which their better sense told many of them, as it told Falkland, it was hopeless to attempt to establish.[12]

In Cerise Whyte-Melville has young Florian de Croix, who becomes a Jesuit, say, "I love to hear of loyalty. It is the reflection of religion on earth."[13]

But mid-Victorian England did not provide its young Cavaliers with objects for generous-hearted loyalties as did the past, and it is in his historical novels that Whyte-Melville most explicitly embodies his ideals.[14] One critic says that Whyte-Melville's historical novels "cover so vast a ground that no pattern can be discerned in the choice of a subject."[15] Actually a very clear pattern can be traced throughout the series, a pattern very nearly

parallel to the chronology of their appearance. With two exceptions the historical romances deal with Cavalier themes in England and France. Stuart history enters into four of them: Mary Queen of Scots in *The Queen's Maries*; Charles I in *Holmby House*; the Old Pretender in *Cerise*; the Young Pretender in *Katerfelto*. In the last two, the Jacobite theme is introduced through a young Englishman still loyal to the lost cause, and, unlike the first two, these do not introduce Stuart royalty in person. Two of these novels (*The Queen's Maries* and *Cerise*) contain scenes at the French court which link them with *Sister Louise*, a retelling of the hapless love of Louise de la Valliere for Louis XIV, and with Rosine, a tale of the French Revolution and of Louis XVI and his Queen. But the theme of the two French novels is similar to that of the English novels--the courtly and cavalier tradition. The two novels which are exceptions to this sequence deal with Biblical or Christian history set against a background of paganism: the glories of Babylon (and the captivity of the Jews in Egypt) in *Sarchedon*, and the pageantry of pagan Rome (and the persecution of the Christians) and the fall of Jerusalem in *The Gladiators*.

Whyte-Melville's defense of the Cavalier includes a Victorian comment upon their morals. In *Holmby House* when Humphrey Bosville, wounded in a duel with Goring, is

brought to the Allonby home and nursed by Grace, Whyte-Melville stops to make a comment on prudery and false modesty, continuing:

> Though the manners of the Court were sufficiently corrupt, the great bulk of the higher classes were to the full as correct and decorous in their demeanor as those of the present time; while for true purity and kindliness of heart, the charity that thinketh no evil, the generosity that forgiveth wrong, who shall say that the keen high-minded Cavaliers, and their simple, straightforward dames, had not the best of it, as compared with the framework of our own cold, conventional and somewhat cowardly state of society? with whose members the prime is founded, not on what you do, but what people say of you! [16]

It is in Rosine, published in 1877, when the rise of the middle class was even more evident, that Whyte-Melville states his most extreme defense of the aristocratic tradition. (Yet is is only the next year in Roy's Wife that he marries a rooming-house clerk, a natural lady, to a husband who is a gentleman by birth, breeding and property.) King Louis XVI, though "lethargic" is "humane, placable" and the Queen

> the courageous and devoted Marie Antoinette, had all the will indeed to reform abuses, abolish tyranny, and make her adopted country happy, but found herself hampered at every turn in a net of privileges, prejudices, customs and etiquette.[17]

In the chapter "Husband and Wife" (one of the few passages in Whyte-Melville's novels which describe domestic accord and mutual affection) the Queen remonstrates with the King for doing away entirely with lettres de cachets instead

merely of remedying abuses in their use. "Madam, it is an injustice!" he tells her. What? A tyranny! I desire to be--I will be the father and protector of my people."18 Later in the same scene, when the Queen calls to the attention of the King the fact that his brother the Duke of Orleans has been seen in the streets wearing a red cap, the King is still unmoved.

> "I would wear the red cap myself," he observed gently, "if it would do them any good. I would go down into the streets and give them my life freely, if the sacrifice would make my people happier for a day."19

Later in the novel the King shows a naive confidence in the States-General, and Whyte-Melville grieves over a lost cause.

> It is maddening to think that he /the demon of discord/ might have been crushed and destroyed, even then, by the fidelity of a few regiments under a brave and determined chief. There are times when mistaken mercy is the deadliest of cruelty, when the sacrifice of ten lives may save ten thousand; but high personal courage is not always willing to accept the responsibility of bloodshed, and excellent officers in the field may be worse than useless to suppress a riot in the street.20

Although Whyte-Melville defends the King, his heart is with the Queen as it had been with Mary Stuart in The Queen's Maries, with Marie Antoinette and her "stately carriage of the head and neck, her delicate ear, her trim waist, and shapely form" and "the small arched nose, the pencilled brows, the delicate clear-cut face, and the deep grey Austrian eyes."21 De Favras, officer of the day and

organizer of a special guard, sheds a tear on the Queen's white hand when with gratitude for his loyalty, she permits him to kiss it:

> How many a noble heart was pledged to the same service, how many a gallant head was to fall in the same cause! Religion, loyalty, chivalry, and honour rallied round the Bourbons, and what was the end of it all?[22]

Like the Cavaliers who thought of Charles I as "king and matyr," Whyte-Melville thinks of Marie Antoinette as queen and martyr:

> There is much in the traditions of race, there is more in the consolations of faith; the spirit of chivalry, and the spirit of religion, bore her up on each side that she might march with unfaltering step to the scaffold, and when they ascended with her to paradise, returned no more till the guilty generation that decreed her murder had passed away, in streams of blood, from the God-forsaken soil of France.[23]

## Section (3) The Victorian Arthur

Besides using the type of the cavalier to make clear his conception of the gentleman, Whyte-Melville uses the type of the mediaeval knight, a Tennysonian King Arthur. Besides scattered allusions through the novels, he elaborates this conception in two places, Bones and I in the essay on "Guinevere" and Uncle John, the final chapter, referring there to the prose of Malory. King Arthur, "that 'monarch bold' has been for after ages the type of all that, in its highest, purest, noblest sense,

constitutes The Gentleman."[24] Like the Kingsleys, Whyte-Melville merges the conception of the ideal gentleman and the Christian, at moments even seeming to find the conception of the Christian acceptable because it is not incongruous with that of the gentleman. "In what consisted this Courtesy, this Gentleness, which every knight assumed?" he asks in another paragraph, and then goes on first to speak of Courage, then to add to it the Christian virtues of Humility and of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

> Was it not indeed an effort after that pure and holy unselfishness, which centuries earlier had walked the earth barefoot, though, being human, the imitation was therefore imperfect and fallible, while compelled by the needs of the Middle Ages to ride in steel?[24]

Beside the type of perfect gentleman, Lancelot and Tristam become fallen angels, bright as Lucifer but still fallen.

> Yes, Launcelot and Tristam stand forth, one on each side of "the selfless, stainless king," gigantic figures, moulded in heroic proportions, to afford warning even as they compel admiration, fallen because of the very qualities that raised them above their fellows, dishonoured in regard to that very honour by which they set such priceless store. Alas for truth, when Tristram could deceive! Alas for loyalty, when Launcelot rode under shield against his lord![25]

And Guinevere becomes the fallen woman.[26]

Footnotes. CHAPTER VII

1. Charles Frederick Harrold, John Henry Newman, 1945, p. 117. It is interesting to notice that it is at the end of this period (1867) that the shift in emphasis in Whyte-Melville's novels begins.

2. The same work, p. 116.

3. The same work, pp. 116-117.

4. General Bounce, p. 11. See also the description of Lord Waywarden of The Brookes of Bridlemere, below, Chap. xiii, Sec. 2. There are fewer references to the "lady," but see The Brookes of Bridlemere, pp. 86 and 300-301 as well as Uncle John, p. 66 and Roy's Wife, p. 243.

5. Presumably connected with the "Romantic" interest in the past. After all, until the death of "Bonnie" Prince Charlie, "The Young Pretender" in 1788, the Cavalier tradition was not wholly a past and subject to romanticization.

6. See the novels of James Grant, for example. In One of the Six Hundred, Chap. iii, Sir Nigel has the cradle of James VII and the bed in which Charles I was born. The history of the Scottish Episcopal Church is relevant, Influenced by the "non-jurists" (the bishops of the Church of England who refused to take the oath of allegiance to William of Orange) and by northern conservatism, it has retained High Church traditions. Charles I appears in the Saints Calendar of the Scottish Church today as "King and Martyr," and the Scottish Church has restored (1929) the communion service from the prayer book of 1549, the book which departed least from the Catholic missal.

7. See discussion of his religious views below, chap. xvi, Sec. 1.

8. Compare Lawrence Guy Livingstone (Chap. xxii) in which Guy praises Claverhouse, his favorite hero.

9. Particularly in the early novels: Tilbury Nogo, p. 245; Kate Coventry, p. 246 and p. 250; Good for Nothing, Chap. xxxix; and The Brookes of Bridlemere, Chap. xix. Such stories appear in other novelists, in Grant's One of the Six Hundred, Chap. ix, for example.

Footnotes Chapter VII (Continued)

10. See Grant's One of the Six Hundred, Chap. ii, on the baronetcies of the Seventeenth Century. Compare Squire Thorne of Ullathorne in Trollope's Barchester Towers and his contempt for these newcomers. (Chap. xx).

11. Compare Guy Livingstone's praise of the gallantry of the aristocrat of old France and his condemnations of the Republicans (Chap. xxiii of Guy Livingstone).

12. Holmby House, p. 39.

13. P. 17.

14. For further comment on the historical novels see above, Chap. iv, Sec. 5, and the discussions of individual novels, also below, Chap. xvi, Secs. 1 and 2.

15. Pryce-Jones. He also comments that the historical romances are unreadable. This is not altogether fair, for they are historical romances, not biography in the modern fictionalized style. Obviously such reading dates quickly in manner and style. One does not read such romances at all if one takes a particular critical attitude toward the genre.

16. Holmby House, pp. 137-138.

17. Rosine, p. 220.

18. The same, p. 270.

19. The same, p. 275.

20. The same, p. 361.

21. The same, p. 297.

22. The same, p. 358.

23. The same, p. 356.

24. Uncle John, p. 429.

25. The same, p. 431.

26. The same, p. 430.

27. See discussion of Bones and I, above, Chap. iv, Sec. 16. To the Christian virtues, Whyte-Melville adds a Victorian one, and must reprove Malory for indelicacy,

deprecating the fact that Malory records questionable conduct "approvingly and without the slightest reproach." This he attributes "less to the morals than to the manners of the age" (Uncle John, p. 431) See also Satanella, p. 180. For a similar passage in Lawrence see Guy Livingstone, Chap. xxx.

# CHAPTER VIII

## TYPES OF THE GENTLEMAN: THE DANDY.[1]

### Section (1) The Young Worldling.

Turning from the past to the contemporary scene Whyte-Melville finds inadequate embodiment of his ideal, and in the early novels particularly he is faced with the corruption of his type of chevalier in the person of the young dandy.[2] In moral tone fashionable society had improved with the passing of the Regency and the change in attitude of the early Victorian period.[3] Rawdon Crawleys were succeeded by the intellectual dandies of Bulwer and Disraeli or by young officers returned from fighting with Wellington on the Peninsular, gentlemen as well as officers. But echoes of the Regency were heard for some time, and in Whyte-Melville's early novels there are elderly clubmen who reminisce about the days of Prince Hal and elderly quires who plan to educate their sons according to Regency standards.

Further, if the moral tone of fashionable society improved during the early Victorian period, the plight of the younger son did not. Educated for sports and fashionable leisure, the younger son as likely as not found himself without funds, forced to take a commission in the Army and to plunge into reckless gambling and a

desperate search for a well-to-do wife. The wars had left many of the landed gentry hard-pressed even before the repeal of the Corn Laws, and some elder sons found themselves no better off than the younger. Not even the character of a "gentleman" in the social sense and the stoicism and nil admirari[4] impassivity of the dandy could ward off ruin forever.

Digby Grand's dandyism barely suffices to sustain him in the complete ruin he brings around his head. To be sure when he first faces ruin, having signed away his inheritance with post-obits, he maintains his calm. Having lost his last shilling gambling in a silver hell, he strolls through the Park and is met by Coralie de Rivolte. When he refuses her offer of a substantial loan, she slips an ivory memorandum case into his hand as a memento.

> Poor Coralie! she had not been gone five minutes when I discovered that the little keepsake she had so earnestly pressed upon me contained, probably, all the money she had with her at the time, which, in the shape of a five-pound note, she had slipped between its leaves, and which was indeed acceptable to my starving condition. . . . I kissed the little souvenir again and again, as I took out the welcome note, which would enable me, at least, to rub on for a few days "till something could be done.". . . .In the meantime, the first consideration was breakfast; and after a shave in a smart shop, for which I paid a shilling. . . I walked into the first coffee-house I could see, and ordered a substantial repast, then the newspaper, and--another extravagance--a cigar![5]

So, shaven and comfortable, with a cigar and the morning paper, he reads of the marriage of Zoe and the death of his

father.

But after the sale of the estate and further and final ruin, it is not his imperturbability but the vigor of youth and the constitution of the active sportsman which is his last resource.

> As I turned the matter over in my mind, I bethought me of the "diggings," the very place for a ruined spendthrift to recover in abundance the dross he had squandered so freely, or hid his head in an unhonoured grave. "California for me!" said I, and I felt my step become brisker, my bearing more erect, as I fancied I had now an object before me. I would change my name, of course; I was strong (for the education of an English dandy makes him no milksop), I was healthy, and I would work my passage out.[6]

Instead he becomes Tom Spenser's partner in the wine business. Sober habits bring with them a revaluation of the dandy's way of life. But he had already expressed compunction. When at Lady Cockle's he had been distressed to find Margery Man-trap, with whom he had been carrying on a flirtation, and Flora Belmont present at the same time. The contrast between the two was the turning point, and the image of a good woman "had an influence on my later life--at times almost imperceptible--at times the only redeeming point in a character otherwise steeped in sin."[7] Certainly the influence was imperceptible until much later, with the self-righteousness of the reformed, he reflects on the vanity of his former existence. Despite his reform there is a touch of regret in hid sescription of a new mode of life.

> My whole mode of life, my demeanour, my very appearance, had undergone a total change at the period when I again take up the thread of my narrative; the loose attire, the lavender gloves, the jaunty hat, and swaggering gait, had been dismissed . . . . The flowing locks had been shorn of their honours, the luxuriant whiskers pruned down to a mercantile pattern. . . . No more prize-fighters in the mornings . . . . no more hacks in the afternoon, dinners at Greenwich with the slang aristocracy, or breakfasts at Richmond with pink bonnets and liberal damsels; and above all, no more betting, horse-racing, or gambling.

His farewell to dandyism is a loving and compact sketch of the dandy's life. As he flourishes in business, his strictures upon his former life become severer, and he predicts the passing of the dandy.

> This gorgeous apparel, these careful toilettes, belong to a class that is now fast dying out; and though your raiment may be not quite so glossy, your demeanour not quite so assuming, yet thank your stars that you are a useful member of society, and have never been by habit or repute a dandy. That a man should walk erect, with his face to heaven, and feel himself possessed of no one redeeming quality in the world save that he puts well-fitting clothes upon a faultless exterior, is a splendid absurdity, that in these days requires no demonstration--that any human being can devote his manly strength and his god-like intellect to no better purpose than that of riding, day after day, three-quarters of a mile backwards and forwards over the dusty surface of Rotten Row,[8] and dancing attendance night after night, in a suffocating crowd whenever a foolish woman chooses to advertise that for this particular evening she means to remain in her own house, is a painful truth, that, alas! must be acknowledged by all who look upon society as it is. . . . No; the rising generation are more manly in their pursuits, more rational in their employments, than that which immediately preceded them; and in several glorious instances, those who, had they lived twenty years ago, might have been empty coxcombs, or, at best, but harmless idlers, are now, thanks to the wide-spreading spirit of Christianity, and the increasing progress of the age. . . the ornaments of a class whose pride and privilege it should be ever to lead their fellow-creatures in the

> path of virtue or the career of honour. The days of coxcombry are gone by; the sun of dandyism is set. Brummel died a prisoner at Calais; and I, Digby Grand, am a wine merchant in the City--sic transit gloria mundi.[9]

Digby's flourishing farewell to the Dandiacal Body was not only premature, but--if taken as the novelist's own thought --also an imprudently impulsive acquiescence to public opinion, for Whyte-Melville speaks in another tone entirely in several novels yet to come. While the Regency buck and the Corinthian did not reappear, the dandyism which belongs to any generation of leisured youth did, and at least in the 1860's and 1870's a new dandy rose from the ashes of the old. The post-Regency intellectual dandy of Bulwer and Disraeli, who studies Plato in the late hours after scintillating in London society, whose grasp of history and politics maddened elderly statesmen, who scorned the meadows of Leicestershire and thought the Army fit only for the stupid and the brutal, does not appear in Whyte-Melville. But successors to Digby Grand continue to frequent Rotten Row, Melton Mowbray, Ascot and Epsom, and Baden-Baden; and Whyte-Melville continues to record their doings. But although in the later novels bright young dandies like Daisy Walters move carelessly and sans reproche through the pages, the more prominent military dandies of the early novels set an example for the reader to beware of: Jack Raffleton of Tilbury Nogo, Gaston D'Orville of General Bounce, Frank Lovell of Kate Coventry, and Walter Brooke

of The Brookes of Bridlemere. Perhaps the novelist's eye for the tragedy of youth dulled as he grew older and his eye for the pathos of middle age sharpened, for certainly the men who are central in the dramatic scenes of the later novels are all past their first flushes of romance.

Jack Raffleton serves as a warning to Tilbury Nogo. His own skill as a horseman led him into excesses of gambling and indirectly caused the death of his sweetheart. "Poor Ellen /at another point, 'Poor, POOR Ellen!/! the suspense and misery she endured on my account were too much for a frame already enfeebled by a consumptive tendency, and she died at nineteen, of a decline."[10]

Gaston D'Orville, older than most of the dandies, shows elements of the gentleman and the preux chevalier under the hardened man of the world. Though surrounded by dandies at the ball Blanche Kettering's eye catches his interesting figure:

> Anon she sees Major D'Orville's commanding figure and handsome manly face, while the low musical voice is still ringing in her ear, and the quiet deferential manner, softened by a protective air of kindness has lost none of its charm. . . . The major was a dangerous man; he betrayed no cox-combry, to mar the effect of his warlike beauty and chivalrous bearing. He never sank the profession, but always spoke of himself as a mere soldier, whilst his manner was that of a finished gentleman. He had distinguished himself, too, on more than one occasion; and the men all had a great opinion of him. . . . Add to these the crowning advantage, that the major, except in one instance of which we know the facts, came into the unequal contest with a heart perfectly invulnerable and case-hardened by intercourse with the world, and a selfishness less the result of nature than education.[11]

D'Orville is not thoroughly bad, "there gleamed ever and anon upon his worldly heart a ray of . . . higher nature . . . nobler instinct,"[12] and he loves Mary Delaval. "In his dreams she bent over him, and her drooping hair swept across his forehead, till the strong man woke, and yearned like a child for a fellow-mortal's love."[13] Gaston, though, has eaten of the tree of knowledge, the knowledge of good and evil, and "not for him the childlike trust that can repose on human affection."[14]

Rejected by Mary in a letter which firmly points out his own faults of character, haggard, old, and unhappy, his hair and moustaches almost gray, Gaston feels the full impact of his wasted life, and in his barracks calmly takes up his pistol to commit suicide. But his attention is momentarily distracted by the sight of Mary's letter, long enough for his courage to return. Now his mind reverts to the religion learned at his mother's knee ("what scheme so probable, what religion so well supported by historical proof and logical deduction, as that which he had learnt at his mother's knee").[15] In the history of the world "One" had sacrificed himself for all, even for D'Orville,

> for him who till this very moment had never thanked him, never acknowledged Him, never so much as thought of Him. The strong man's heart was touched, the well was unsealed in the desert, and, as the tears gushed from his unaccustomed eyes, Gaston D'Orville bent the knees that had not bent for a lifetime; and can we doubt that he was forgiven? [16]

A siege of brain fever completes the reformation of the older soldier, and his reformation moves the young Lacquers as well. Together they plan to go to India to do their duty in the state to which God has appointed them.

Captain Frank Lovell in Kate Coventry is seen through the eyes of the heroine, to whom, as the author would put it, everything is couleur de rose, and the account is purged of the more turgid reflections on ruin and sin. But Frank's career is one of duplicity similar to that of Digby Grand and Gaston D'Orville--pursuit of one girl out of sentiment, of another out of self-interest. With Kate's frowning Cousin Joh, the satirically-tongued Mrs. Lumley, and the protective Lady Scapegrace nearby to warn Kate of Frank's character, Frank finds need for self-justification, and he pours into Kate's ears a brief sketch sufficiently characteristic of the career of the young officer-dandy to stand for several of the Whyte-Melvillean examples. Frank's father was the second son of a peer and ran through the fortune of his wife, a cotton-spinner's niece. Then his parents died, when Frank was young.

> The boy went to his uncle--the peer, not his uncle the mill-owner--to be brought up. Frank was consequently what the world calls a "well-bred one"; his name was in the Peerage, though he had a first cousin once removed who was but an industrious weaver. The peer, of course sent him to Eton.[17]
>
> "Ten thousand pounds," said that judicious relative, "will buy him a commission. The lad's handsome and clever; he can play whist now better than my boy's private tutor. By the time his ten thousand's gone, we'll pick up an heiress for him. 'Gad! how

> like my poor brother he is about the eyes."
>
> So Frank was started in life with a commission in the Light Dragoons, an extremely good opinion of himself, and as much of his ten thousand pounds as he had not already anticipated during the one term he spent at Oxford before he was rusticated. . . . By his own account he was a gambler, of course. A man turned loose upon the world, with such an education as most English gentlemen deem befitting their sons, and without means to indulge the taste that education has led him to acquire, is very likely to become so . . . . /Kate here describes the atmosphere of home and school./ Then come the realities of manhood, for which he is so ill-prepared. In the absence of all useful knowledge and practical pursuits, amusement becomes the business of life. Human nature cannot be idle, and if not doing good, is pretty sure to be doing harm. Pleasure, excitement, and fashionable dissipation must be purchased and paid for pretty dearly, in hard coin of the realm. The younger son, with his ten thousand pounds, must soar in the same flight, must go as fast as his elder brother with ten thousand a year. How is it to be done? Why, of course, he must make money, if he can, by betting and play. So it goes on smoothly enough for a time. The Arch-croupier below, they say, arranges these matters for beginners; but the luck turns at last. The capital is eaten into; the Jews are called in; and the young gentleman is ruined. Frank, I think, at this time was in a fair way of arriving pretty rapidly at the customary catastrophe.[18]

Frank eventually decamps with Miss Molasses before Kate has compromised herself.

Walter Brooke of The Brookes of Bridlemere comes nearer than the others to model dandyism, but there is a flaw to his character, too, and his careless recklessness leads him to dishonesty such that only by chance is he preserved from ruin and public disgrace. The post popular ("indeed, as it is sometimes called, par excellence, the 'show'")[19] man of his regiment--but not the most beloved--Walter's word is of great weight among his fellows,

especially with Ragman de Rolle, a well-to-do young cornet, who makes Walter his beau ideal. (Ragman is a foil to Walter, "sturdy," of "frank disposition," "a good fellow enough, not bright, nor quick-witted, but with a certain plodding sense of right, and a nice feeling of honour that guided his conduct as safely as any amount of worldly wisdom.")[20] Walter's secret is that

> whatever he did, he had the knack of making it appear he could do better if he chose. There was a quiet matter-of-course consciousness of superiority in his manner; perhaps the result of natural audacity and self-reliance; perhaps assumed from motives of calculation, by one who was shrewd enough to know that in a society the world assesses a man at his own valuation, which led people to think there was considerable power latent in Brooke's character, only wanting opportunity to display itself; that he had it "in him, sir!" so they said, "and some day it would come out." . . . .
>
> Walter Brooke was careful never to over-do the thing. He was no boaster, but by inference--no swaggerer, save by implication. He seemed to say less than he knew, and to mean more than he said. Generally cool, always collected, neither subject to the influence of bodily caloric nor mental excitement, he had the credit of steadier nerves and a better temper than he really possessed. Decidedly good-looking--at least so the women said--he enjoyed the further advantage of a figure which coats and other articles of attire fitted of their own accord, while his hands and feet seemed made on purpose for the gloves and boots he wore. Walter spent less money on his personal adornment than any other young man in the regiment. . . yet they admitted unanimously (and this is no mild panegyric), Brooke was "quite the hussar."[21]

But there are evidences of weakness. "The men were not perhaps so fond of him as the officers. He was aware of this, and it annoyed him, for he knew that his inferiors are nicer judges of a gentleman than his equals."[22]

Walter's dashing horsemanship on the hunting field and in the steeplechase,[23] lead him into betting and debt. His attempt to put himself on his feet by marrying the dashing Lady Julia, a more aristocratic Kate Coventry who sees through the thinness of Walter's bravado, is put down when she good-naturedly refuses him. Before the story is over Walter, in desperate circumstances, disgraces the uniform by tricking Ragman out of three hundred pounds;[24] and though Walter escapes the consequences of his act, his Uncle, Sir Archibald, sternly insists that he leave the service the honor of which he has sullied.

## Section (2) Innocence Corrupted.

Not all the young dandies of the early novels are worldly or hardened. (Nor for that matter are all the young gentleman dandies.) Nor does the novelist restrict himself in analysis of their characters to resistance to worldly temptation. Charles Kettering of _General Bounce_, Gilbert Orme of _Good for Nothing_, and Gerard Ainslie of _The White Rose_ are developed in chronological sequence as more serious studies.[25] The picture of Charles Kettering is merely a preliminary sketch for Gilbert Orme. Digby Grand was brought up to be a dandy by a dandy; Charles Kettering, like George Osborne in Vanity Fair, was brought up to be a gentleman by a middle class Englishman, a clerk in a counting house, who prospered commercially

and became convinced of lineal descent from one of the oldest families in England. "Old Kettering wanted to make his nephew a gentleman--that was it. When asked how Charlie was getting on at Eton, and what he learned there, the uncle invariably replied, "Learn, sir! why, he'll learn to be a gentleman."[26] (It is at this point that Whyte-Melville gives his most elaborate definition of a gentleman.)[27] Charles is not without traces of dandyism (at one moment in the train he pulls at his moustache so often that a spectator thinks he has a sore lip), but it is his qualities as a gallant young officer that Whyte-Melville emphasizes. He has all the makings of a soldier, "the cheerful spirits, the gallant bearing, the love of action, and the chivalrous vanity--half courageous, half cox-combrical--which form the military character."[28] His opportunity comes in Africa in the campaign against the Kaffirs. He has carried a message from headquarters to the field, and the commandant wonders how he can get him back.

> "We're doing nothing at headquarters, sir," exclaimed Charlie, with flashing eyes; "will you allow me to join the attack tomorrow, with your people?"
>
> The three officers looked at him approvingly, and the ensign muttered, "By gad, he's a trump, and no mistake!" but old Swipes shook his grey head with a half-melancholy smile as he scanned the boy's handsome face and shapely figure, set off by his blue lancer uniform, muddy and travel-stained as it was. "I've seen many a fine fellow go down," thought the veteran, "and I like it less and less. . . . I suppose you won't stay here, with fighting in the

> front. 'Gad, you shall go--you're a real good one, and I like you for it." So the fine old fellow seized Charlie's hand and wrung it hard, with the tears in his eyes.[29]

Before the battle is over, Charlie finds himself commanding a sub-division. But he is left a casualty on the battlefield, found and rescued by a black Fingoe girl, hunting for her lover. He lingers in the hospital, recovering but slowly until his friend Frank Hardingstone comes from England. During the siege of illness he suffers from a mental depression which anticipates slightly the disastrous mental state of Gilbert Orme later.

The sentimental naivety of the camp scenes in General Bounce is repeated in The Interpreter, but after that novel Whyte-Melville does not attempt to treat camp and battle field again, whether because his material ran out or because he realized that he lacked the incisiveness and restraint necessary for effectiveness it is difficult to determine. When he comes to Gilbert Orme in Good for Nothing he retains the basic goodness of character but discards the military adjuncts. Superficially Gilbert is the dandy and man of fashion. At Tattersall's he is as well known to the cads as is Wellington statue, and all agree that he is "about the nicest fellow in England."[30]

> Half a dozen seasons in London, autumns at Cowes, and winters in the grass countries, had thoroughly identified him with that abnormal portion of the human race which calls itself the world; and with good spirits, good looks, and a good income, few went the pace so easily and gracefully as gentle Gilbert Orme.[31]

But unlike many (and unlike the Frank Lovells and Walter Brookes), he is not "devoid of scruples and utterly reckless of consequences."[32] Although he lives in the midst of temptations and dissipation of London life, "there was a certain childlike simplicity in his character, which, while it enhanced the pungency of his pleasures, doubtless deprived them of their most deleterious ingredients."[33] The narrator continues with an extended account of Gilbert's boyhood and the way in which the stories of ancient heroes fired his imagination and stirred his noble heart. Years later when the disappointed Gilbert is seeking escape in violent sport during the day and frenzied dissipation, ending in the laudanum habit, at night, the narrator takes pains to explain that there was one redeeming point remarkable in these unbridled excesses. "The other sex were rigidly excluded" and Gilbert "shuddered at the bare mention of a woman's actual degradation, and though Clitus had been sure of a welcome to the feast for the very extravagance of his potations, Phryne must have unveiled her ivory charms elsewhere."[34] Like Charles Kettering, Gilbert shows a strain of the "womanly element which makes an amiable companion but a weak man"[35] and he attempts to provide a further analysis of his character which may account for his disintegration under the strain of disappointment.

> His was a temperament capable of going any length where the affections as well as the passions were concerned. Contrary to one of the fundamental rules of mechanics, his violentum was also perpetuum, and he was a rare instance of impetuosity and perseverance combined. Beneath that careless indolent exterior lay, dormant indeed, but only waiting to be aroused, strong passions, unbending resolution, an iron will that could strike fiercely on the instant, or wait doggedly for years, the whole tempered by a rare generosity and kindliness of heart. Such a character, indeed, is powerful for good or for evil; such a character, above all others, requires some guidance superior to the sordid motives that commonly sway minkind.[36]

One solution to the problem of the corroded character and the corrupted gentleman Whyte-Melville offers over and over again in the early novels--Evangelical faith.[37] The narrator of the story, who had been Gilbert's tutor, writes:

> How often do I reproach myself with my negligence towards my pupil! Woe is me! for I had already learned the lesson on my own account, had been crushed and humbled and beaten with many stripes for my sins. Yet was I content to pore with him over the character of every sage in history; to discuss the belief, the career, the doctrine of each, and pass by the Man of Sorrows in silence as though He were but a fabulous personage after all; nay could read the Greek Testament, and dwell upon the purity of its language, the simplicity of its expressions, the very mood and tense of a verb, whilst I neglected or slurred over the Divine Spirit that vivified and sanctified the whole.[38]

Later in the Australian bush Gilbert has the opportunity to murder the one man who stands between him and Ada. He resists the temptation.

> For Ada's sake! Never till that moment had he known how much he loved her. Does the brightness of heaven, think ye, glow with half such splendour to the exulting seraphim as to the poor lost spirit, turning

> sadly from the light to its own portion of darkness for evermore?
>
> Then the reaction came on, and he fled into the bush and threw himself on his face in the long grass, and wept tears of blood. God help him! had he fallen on his knees and thanked his Maker for his deliverance from the guilt of murder, crying aloud for mercy, that the rod might be spared, the burden lightened, if ever such a little--I think even then it had been the saving of my boy.[39]

Whyte-Melville's analysis of Orme is the most elaborate attempt in the novels to treat the inner struggles of the young gentleman-dandy. Gerard Ainslie, generically related to Charles Kettering and Gilbert Orme is a dummy figure, with even less substance and more surface melodrama than the other two, and the attention is shifted to Vandeleur, an older man, and to Norah Welby, a shift which anticipates developments in the "later" novels

## Section (3) Galsworthy's "Bright Beings"

Into the late sixties and the seventies, when the early Victorian reaction to Regency profligacy had passed, and the young Prince of Wales led a renewal of fashionable life, a new crop of dandies in Whyte-Melville's novels include Daisy Waters and others, most of them brighter figures than dandies of the early novels. Presumably it is this later type of dandy which excited the imagination of young Jolyon Forsyte when he went to Cambridge. (The fact that young Jolyon went to Cambridge in 1866 before

these later dandies were created does not change this supposition, for Galsworthy indicates an indifference to chronology in the matter by including Daisy Waters among young Jolyon's idols. Satanella was published 1872.)

> In 1866 at the age of nineteen, young Jolyon Forsyte left Eton and went up to Cambridge, in the semi-whiskered condition of those days. An amiable youth of fair scholastic and athletic attainments, and more susceptible to emotions, aesthetic and otherwise, than most young barbarians, he went up a little intoxicated on the novels of Whyte-Melville. From continually reading about whiskered dandies, garbed to perfection and imperturbably stoical in the trying circumstances of debt and discomfiture, he had come to the conviction that to be whiskered and unmoved by Fortune was quite the ultimate hope of existence. There was something not altogether ignoble at the back of his creed. He passed imperceptibly into a fashionable set, and applied himself to the study of whist. All the heroes of Whyte-Melville played whist admirably; all rode horses to distraction. Young Jolyon joined the Drag, and began to canter over to Newmarket, conveniently situated for Cambridge undergraduates.[40]

In the course of his fashionable career, he takes a bank of one hundred with only fifty pounds in his pocket. It is with sinking heart and marbled countenance that he sits down at the head of the green board. "This was his best chance, so far, of living up to his whiskers--come what would, he must not fail the shades of 'Digby Grand,' 'Daisy Waters,' and the 'Honble. Crasher'!"[41] When he loses, he is forced to the money lenders, and with a sort of horror he realizes how difficult it will be to explain this to his father. But "after all, 'Daisy Waters,' 'Digby Grand,' and the 'Honble. Crasher,' and the rest of

the elect--had they jibbed at money-lenders? Not so!"[42]

The career of Digby Grand might have warned Young Jolyon of disaster. (So too that of Daisy Waters who escapes from a debt of three thousand pounds by good fortune only.) The Honble. Crasher, however, the nonpareil of Whyte-Melville's imperturbable dandies, rides debtless and languid over Leicestershire grass. Amiable and placid, he comes to life only when in the saddle or discussing the day's run. Mr. Sawyer makes his acquaintance on the train to Market Harborough and becomes the object of the Honourable's good-natured protection, not always an advantage to Mr. Sawyer, for the Honourable has his foibles. It is on the train that he first comes to life, warming to a conversation about fox-hunting and "into a languid enthusiasm on the only subject to which he could direct the whole attention for ten consecutive minutes."[43]

> "In short /the Honble. Crasher tells Mr. Sawyer7, they ran him all about, you know, over a capital line, and turned him up in the open, at the end of seven-and-twenty minutes without a check, and very straight, you know, and all that; satisfactory to everybody, and not at all bad fun, and so on."
>
> The Honourable C. was rapidly collapsing, running down like the last notes of a musical box. Ere he arrived at this very explicit conclusion he had become perfectly torpid again.[47]

Mr. Sawyer has adequate chance to observe the Honble.'s recklessness under the calm manner. On their way to Mr. Sawyer's first Leicestershire run, he follows

the "languid desperado" who tries a four-foot fence:

> The Honourable turned his horse round, took him in a grasp of iron, and put him rather slowly at the gate, which the animal, a well-bred, raking-looking chestnut, with a long bangtail, got over exceedingly badly, striking the top bar with fore and hind legs; but neither disturbing the Honourable Crasher's seat nor the imperturbability of his demeanour in the slightest degree. He looked back, however, to see his companion come and even condescended to express a feeble approval of his performance, without removing the cigar from his mouth.[45]

Despite the perpetual effect of being in the last stage of exhaustion, the Honble. never misses a chance of placing his neck in jeopardy when in the saddle and frequently leads Mr. Sawyer an exciting life, though Mr. Sawyer can usually hold his own "riding fence for fence with the Honourable Crasher, whose pale face wears a smile of quiet satisfaction."[46] Away from his horses, the Honble. proves to be a very comfortable companion. He is apparently free of vices except for his cigar: the "Honourable Crasher, though he smoked a great deal, had neither the spirits nor inclination to drink much: consequently, notwithstanding his languor and apparent debility, he had preserved the integrity of his nervous system."[47] Nor does an excessive interest in the other sex lead him astray. Match-making mothers instinctively realize he is not a marrying man. Cissie Dove the parson's daughter instinctively sets her cap at Mr. Sawyer, not the Honourable, who is content to entertain Cissie's matronly

mother, whose favorite he is. "She admired hugely, as country dames will, his languor, his insouciance, his recklessness and dandyism--above all, his tendency to become torpid at a moment's notice, which latter faculty frequently provoked the strong-minded Cissie beyond endurance."[48] Perhaps it is only the Honble.'s perpetual good-nature and amiability which keep him, despite his dandyish impeccability of dress and his recklessness in the saddle, from being a complete bore. At the ball, when Cissie's flirtings, through miscalculation, provoke Mr. Sawyer too far, it is comfortable for the visitor from the provinces to retire

> with one or two convivial spirits, who finished the evening in the Honourable Crasher's rooms on cigars and brandy and water; the latter gentleman, who had asked Lady Barbara to dance, and then forgotten all about it, having made an early retreat to those comfortable quarters.[49]

In the early novels, the Honble. Crasher is unique, creating a calm and untroubled world from which the inward remorse and turmoil of the other dandies are excluded. Nor is there actually one like him among the later and more amiable young dandies of the novels of the Seventies. Most of these play pleasant but unexciting roles, pursuing pleasant but conventional heroines. Cousin John and Kate Coventry continue in the later novels but in secondary roles, attention being shifted to more mature lovers, more daring women, and the Digby Grands

and Gilbert Ormes disappear almost altogether. Among the amiable successors to Cousin John are Dick Stanmore (*M. or N.*), Frank Vanguard (*Contraband*), John Walters (*Satanella*), Horace Maxwell (*Uncle John*), and Collingwood Brail (*Roy's Wife*). But the brightest of these is Young Jolyon's third idol, John "Daisy" Walters, who "piqued himself on his *sang-froid*. If the *fractus orbis* had gone, as he would have expressed it, 'to blue smash,' *impavidum ferient ruinae*, he would have contemplated the predicament from a ludicrous rather than a perplexing point of view."[50] Daisy's free and easy manner with the other sex is a constant and bewildering problem to the impeccably correct and chivalrous General St. Josephs. On one occasion at least he upsets even the poise of Blanche Douglas. Daisy has just lost three thousand pounds and is ruined. Blanche borrows an equal amount of money from the General, committing herself in her own mind to marry him and to give up all hope of Daisy, to whom she intends to send the borrowed funds, thinking of him as distraught and in exile. Driving home from her interview with the General, her hansome passes within six inches of another moving in the opposite direction: 2seated therein, smoking a cigar, with a white hat and light-coloured gloves . . .ruined, reckless, never-to-be forgotten Daisy!"--his face "devoid of care," his person "well-dressed, as usual," and his

attention "engrossed by a pretty horse-breaker in difficulties on his other side."[51] Shortly afterward, still ignorant of Blanche's intentions, Daisy takes refuge from debt in Ireland and stays at the most expensive hotel in Dublin.[52]

## Section (4) The Beauty and the Seraph.

Ouida's Under Two Flags and Lawrence's Guy Livingstone present a contrast in types of dandy which Whyte-Melville at no point adopts despite the obvious advantages of the contrast in popular appeal. This is the contrast between the muscular dandy and the apparently effeminate dandy, between Bertie Cecil the "Beauty" and his friend the "Seraph" ("known to the world as the Marquis of Rockingham, son of the Duke of Lyonesse"[53]) in Under Two Flags, and between Guy himself and Charley Forrester in Guy Livingstone. Ordinarily the effeminate dandy is a butt of amusement or an object of contempt. The Honourable Jocelyn de Lancy in Grant's Frank Hilton,[54] who has an inveterate lisp that completes his blase air is the former; and the fop Horace D'Almayne in Smedley's Harry Coverdale's Courtship is not only the latter but a full-bown murderous villain. In Under Two Flags and Guy Livingstone, however, the effiminate dandy becomes a much more theatrical person, outwardly languid but actually as hard as his more muscular foil who is usually his friend and companion. Charley

Forrester, for example,

> was about three-and-twenty then, rather tall, but very slightly built; his eyes long, sleepy, of a violet-blue; features small and delicately cut, with a complexion so soft and bright that his silky chestnut mustache hardly saved the face from effeminacy; his hands and feet would have satisfied the Pacha of Tebelen at once as to his purity of race . . . .His manner was very fascinating[he had a voice that, though slightly affected and *trainante*, was very musical] and, with women, had a sort of caress in it which is hard to describe, though even with *them* he seldom excited himself.[55]

Bertie Cecil in *Under Two Flags* is much the same, but more so, with a "languid insolence and gentle effrontery." Bertie (the Honourable Bertie Cecil, second son of Viscount Royallieu) had

> a face with as much delicacy and brilliancy as a woman's,--handsome, thoro'bred, languid, nonchalant, with a certain latent recklessness under the impassive calm of habit, and a singular softness given to the large, dark, hazel eyes by the unusual length of the lashes over them. His features were exceedingly fair--fair as the fairest girl's; his hair was of the softest, silkiest, brightest chestnut; his mouth very beautifully shaped."[57]

He lives in splendor in his barracks room or his room in Piccadilly.[58]

Smedley's muscular heroes are somewhat schoolboyish in the readiness with which they display their prowess and the pride they show (unlike any of Whyte-Melville's sportsmen, too, they are quick with their fists). But Lawrence and Ouida permit no such exuberance. Guy Livingstone, when the narrator sees him for the first time since Oxford days, is stern.

> "The stern expression about his mouth was more decided and unvarying than ever--an effect which was increased by the heavy mustache that, dense as a curassier's of the Old Guard,--fell over his lip in a black cascade. It was the face of one of those stone Crusaders who look up at us from their couches in the Round Church of the Temple."[59]

Sheila Kaye-Smith summarizes Guy in her introduction to a recent reprint of the novel: the hero was a Man indeed

> "whose 'silky black moustache' fell over his mouth 'like a cascade,' who bit his lip and 'the blood flowed down his chin,' who struck his clenched fist upon the mantel-piece and 'the blood gushed forth,'[60] who crushed a silver cup in his bare hand, who rode the wildest horses racing and hunting, who fought duels, who had brain fever, who engaged in 'nameless dissipation.'"[61]

Ouida's Marquis of Rockingham "that splendid golden-haired Colossus known as the 'Seraph'"[62] is no less impressive, "a tall fair man, with the limbs of a Hercules, the chest of a prize-fighter, and the face of a Raphael angel, known in the Household [once more!] as the Seraph."[63]

Compared with these splendid creatures of romantic fancy, Whyte-Melville's dandies are soberly real. Despite the precedent in contemporary fiction, he eschews the melodramatic contrast. An occasional effeminate dandy appears--Sir Ascot Uppercrust in General Bounce, a figure of comedy, for example, and there is, to be sure, the languid Honourable Crasher, but he is in a class by himself, and his imperturbability is matched by his good nature and is without ostentation. Charles Kettering and Gilbert Orme have a touch of the womanly in them, but this is a matter

of character and a sign of a basic innocence which preserves them from the worst temptations of their existence. Nor does the muscular dandy appear, either the frank sportsman who is nevertheless handy with his fists, characteristic of Smedley's novels, or the Satanic or Seraphic giant of Lawrence or Ouida. The nearest character to the Satanic Guy Livingstone is Gaston D'Orville of General Bounce (a novel which appeared before rather than after Guy Livingstone in time), and, for part of the story, Lord Bearwarden of M. or N., though neither, despite worldly disillusionment, is quite as self-consciously rebellious as Guy. Despite this difference, it is tempting--and possible--to find a generic similarity between Guy Livingstone and the earlier dandies of Whyte-Melville's novel and between Bertie and the later dandies of Whyte-Melville's novels, a chronological parallel (since Ouida is later by about a decade than Lawrence though there is considerable overlap) which may not be mere coincidence but rather a reflection of popular taste and the temper of fashionable society, one which corresponds with the post-Regency seriousness and the revival later of a lighter fashionable life.

Impossible as the struttings of Guy Livingstone seem, there is evidence of the Guy Livingstone manner in one figure known to the sporting world, the Byronic Australian poet Adam Lindsay Gordon, educated in England

at Cheltenham and at Woolwich (a military academy),[64] a boxer in his youth and both in England and later in Australia a daring steeplechase rider,[65] melancholy and Byronic in temperament,[66] and finally a suicide.[67] A daring rider, he was notorious not only for his steeplechase riding but as well for a nearly suicidal leap on a horse at Mt. Gambier.[68] Among his final pieces of ill luck was his failure to make good his claim to family estates in England (which would have brought him back after adventures in Australia like a Henry Kingsley hero), Whyte-Melville was in part responsible for Gordon's reputation as a writer of sporting verse (a friend of Gordon had sent the novelist a copy of Sea Spray and Smoke Drift).[69] Gordon dedicated his Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes to Whyte-Melville. The poem in the volume "A Dedication: To the Author of Holmby House"[70] explains[71] that Gordon had read the book ten years before, when ill with fever. It is the chivalry expressed in Holmby House which catches Gordon's imagination as it did the minds of others, and though in another poem, Gordon speaks of Whyte-Melville as "Market Harborough," it is the tales of chivalry which "Market Harborough" writes that Gordon praises.[72] The book dedicated to Whyte-Melville was published, dramatically enough, on the day before Gordon shot himself. Gordon belonged in the tradition of the military man and sportsman, and his early literary taste included particu-

larly Scott, Byron, and Smedley (Lewis Arundel, the muscular hero, was his model).[73] One of his favorite subjects was the Charge of the Light Brigade.[74] Gordon killed himself in June, 1870. Whyte-Melville alludes to Gordon in Satanella, 1872. The General, looking at Daisy's mare, quotes a stanza from Gordon's verse and speaks of that "ill-fated author."

> "It describes your mare exactly, and how the gifted, ill-fated author would have liked a ride on such a flyer as Satanella."
>
> The speaker's voice shook, and the cigar quivered between his lips while they pronounced that ill-omened name.[75]

Among the activities of the more muscular dandies of the minor Victorian novel was the affair of honor and the duel. The duel has a place of particular dramatic moment in the Mid-Victorian novel because it was at this time that enforcement of the law became very strict.[76] (The last duel fought in the service was one in 1844.)[77] Propaganda against the duel is a commonplace of fiction at this time. The fact that society now supported the law, made the duel particularly exciting, and men of honor who occasionally found no other way in which to settle their affairs crossed the channel for their meetings. Unlike the novels of Henry Kingsley in which the fatal duel is given prominence, Whyte-Melville makes certain that his never come off--they are prevented by sheer accident (Tilbury Nogo) or by some other solution to the affair (M. or N.).[78]

In Whyte-Melville's later novels, the Digby Grands and the Gaston D'Orvilles, the nearest in this author's works to the muscular dandy, are replaced by more amiable youths. But the Digby Grands and Gaston D'Orvilles (or, since these two characters reformed in time, their unreformed counter-parts) appear as superannuated roues: Sir Henry Hallaton in Contraband, Lord Fitzowen in Roy's Wife, and Lord St. Moritz in Black but Comely. These characters, like others in Whyte-Melville's fiction, are toned down and milder versions of a type found elsewhere in fiction of the period. Sir Henry Hallaton, for example, had not been a roue until after two marriages--the first had been disillusioning when his wife ran off with another man, the second marriage had been steady but dull. Sir Henry's continued philandering after the natural death of his second wife brings him finally to a gouty and lonely old age (the same end which the other elderly roues come to) although his character is somewhat redeemed by his devotion to his motherless daughter.[79]

The counterparts of Sir Henry in other novels are more strongly drawn. The Colonel in Charles Kingsley's Yeast has followed in youth a career which is an epitome of that of Digby Grand and is now a wreck of a man. "They sent me out 'to see life,' and Eton, and the army and Crockford's, and Newmarket, and fine gentlemen,

and fine ladies, and luxury, and flattery, brought me to thos! Oh, father! father! was that the only way to make a gentleman of your son?"[80] But Charles Kingsley is hard on all types of dandy though morally impregnable in this instance. Other novelists find in these characters a touch of something which has been lost in Victorian propriety. Sir Henry Fallowfield of Guy Livingstone, another hardened, gouty old roue, pursues his way of life with an almost philosophical awareness of its meaning, and he comments on "our effete world." "Modern exquisites," he says, "have courage, and self-possession, and conceit--great elements of success with women, I own--but they have not much more. There is a decadence since my younger days . . . . and how very far we fell short of the roues of the Regence!"[81] He flatters the circulating library reader by such comments as "It is very hard on the women, certainly, that our race should have degenerated so; for I believe in my conscience they are as clever and wicked, and appreciate temptation as much as ever."[82] Lord Saltire of Henry Kingsley's Ravenshoe is a more distinguished person and more convincing character than Sir Henry Fallowfield, and his comments on the decadence which Sir Henry speaks of broadens the implication of the change which has taken place. He has bridged the early and the middle Nineteenth Century, and unlike the younger men of the novel, has been through the exhausting times of the

Napoleonic Wars and their aftermath. Reflecting on this, he says "I am afraid that they [the young men] are getting too unbrutalized for another struggle like ours."[83]

But the young dandy and officer of the earlier part of the century does not always develop into the roue. As frequently as he develops into the elderly soldier, courteous, tactful, and pathetically ready to give his affection and name to a younger woman and to accept in return whatever kind of response she can give. Flora, the passionate widow in Guy Livingstone, finally marries Sir Marmaduke Dorrillon, a courteous, elderly lover, and a similar character, Sir Michael Audley, is central to the story of Mrs. Braddon's Lady Audley's Secret. Whyte-Melville is more at home with such a person and manages this type of character more skilfully than he does his elderly roues. General St. Josephs of Satanella is one of this best characterizations.[84]

Footnotes CHAPTER VIII

1. For additional comments on the "Dandy" see the section on Rotten Row, below, Chap. X, Sec. 3, and the section on Thackeray below, Chap. xvii, Sec. 2.

2. Whyte-Melville's preoccupation with the dandy as gentleman is in contrast to Charles Kingsley's preoccupation with the gentleman in terms of the English countryman. Lord Minchampstead in Two Years Ago (Chap. xxv) is "far too fine a gentleman to trouble about looking fine. See also Charles Kingsley's description of the Belgravian gentleman and the old roue, of dandy origins, below, Chap. viii, Sec. 4, Henry Kingsley takes a different attitude in The Hillyars and the Burtons (Chap. xlix) in which, after remarking that men who do not know them sneer at the dandies, he goes on to praise their bravery and sense of honor. He adds that the halo of glory which Sebastopol and Delhi threw over them has done them infinite harm, and he pleads for an almagation of the classes, asking the dandies "to take their gloves off sometimes." Grant, in Frank Hilton (Chap. xlii) takes an attitude more similar to that of Whyte-Melville in his description of Fred Langley, a typical young officer, "a young Englishman, a devil-may-care fellow in a regiment of the line; a man of fashion and pleasure; yet with all his off-hand style, I knew Langley to be . . . strictly a man of honor." In Whyte-Melville's novels the wilder and corrupted dandies of the early novels become the old roues of the mid-Victorian period, and a new and softer type of dandy appears.

3. See, for example, The White Rose, p. 20. For a description of the Corinthian of the Regency, see Anthony Steel, Jorrock's England, (Preface, 1932), p. 45, and also Thackeray's Vanity Fair, Chap. x; also Rosa, work cited, p. 25, and Elwin, work cited, p. 120 (a description of the Hon. Grantley Berkeley).

4. The favorite phrase. See also General Bounce, p. 174, Satanella, p. 21, and Uncle John, p. 48. Also Smart, Breezie Langton, Book II, Chap. iv.

5. Digby Grand, p. 292.

6. The same, p. 306.

7. The same, p. 113.

8. This was not Whyte-Melville's permanent attitude. Contrast his description of Rotten Row in Bones and

I and in Riding Recollections.

9. Digby Grand, pp. 315-316.

10. Tilbury Nogo, p. 98.

11. General Bounce, p. 105.

14. The same work, p. 248.

15. The same, p. 249.

16. For another repentant dandy, see Lawrence's Guy Livingstone, Chap. xxxvi. There a simple clergyman visits the proud dandy who awaits death, his spirit broken. "Guy since trusted him implicitly when he spoke of the Past and the Future that was so near. The repentance that was begun by Constance's dying bed, was completed. I am sure, on his own." The language which Whyte-Melville uses is also matched by the following passage from Smedley's Lewis Arundel (Chap. xlviii): "The reflection that when our sorrow has become too heavy for us to bear, there is One, mighty to save, Himself in His earthly career a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, who will strengthen us to support them, must console the depest mental anguish: and we do not believe that any man has ever prayer truly and earnestly without receiving comfort from doing so." See also Thackeray, below, Chap. xvii, Sec. 2.

17. Compare Charles Kettering of General Bounce Sec. 2 of this chapter).

18. Kate Coventry, pp. 212-214.

19. The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 20

20. The same place.

21. The same work, p. 22.

22. The same place.

23. See discussion of the hunting scenes, Chap. iv.

24. See Trollope's Framley Parsonage for the man who always carries, as does Walter Brooke, a bill stamp

with him and who has a friend sign a second bill supposing that the first has been destroyed.

25. See discussion of the relationships among General Bounce, Good for Nothing, and The White Rose, above, Chap. v, Secs. 4, 10, and 15.

26. General Bounce, p. 11.

27. See the discussion of the "gentleman," above, Chap. vii, Sec. 1.

28. General Bounce, p. 69.

29. The same work, p. 141.

30. Good for Nothing, p. 11.

31. The same place.

32. The same work, p. 12.

33. The same place.

34. The same work, p. 278.

35. The same work, p. 165. (Cp. General Bounce, p. 74.)

36. The same place.

37. In the later novels Whyte-Melville uses similar solutions for the problems of the young women who replace for the most part the dandies of the earlier novels, and the religious sentiment among men is reserved almost completely for the clergymen themselves.

38. Good for Nothing, pp. 161-162.

39. The same work, p. 227.

40. John Galsworthy, "A Sad Affair" in On Forsyte 'Change, 1930, p. 86.

41. The same, p. 87.

42. The same, p. 88. Marrot in The Life and Letters finds in the description of Young Jolyon in "A Sad Affair" a succinct outline of Galsworthy's own attitude

when he matriculated at Oxford in 1886 (Marrot, pp. 59-61 and 63). Three years later in the Confession Album of a cousin the following entry under Galsworthy's name appears: "My Favourite Authors: Thackeray, Dickens, Whyte-Melville" (Marrot, p. 64). Fifty-eight years after Jolyon had become an Eton boy, he reminisced: "How delicious, after howling in a top hat and a sweltering heat [at a cricket match], to go home with his father in a hansom Cab, bathe, dress, and forth to the 'Disunion' Club, to dine off whitebait, cutlets, and a tart, and go--two 'swells', old and young, in lavender kid gloves--to the opera or play. And on Sunday, when the match was over, and his top hat duly broken, down with his father in a special hansom to the 'crown and Sceptre,' and the terrace above the river--the golden sixties when the world was simple, dandies glamorous, Democracy not born, and the books of Whyte-Melville coming thick and fast." (*To Let*, Pt. III, Chap. i [Nobel Prize Edition, Vol. I, *The Forsyte Saga*, p. 801]).

But Young Jolyon is not a typical Forsyte, and in Galsworthy's *Saga* and its sequels it is not the Forsytes but the Cherrels and the Monts who perpetuate the life of the class about whom Whyte-Melville wrote. The Forsytes represent a class still pushing its way to dominance when Whyte-Melville wrote, and though they have a code and ethic of their own it is not that of the sportsman, the dandy, or the country gentleman. For there is a basic generosity and carelessness about the sportsman-dandy which the close and property-conscious Forsytes do not have. In Galsworthy's novels it is particularly among the aristocrats that one finds traces of the older dandy-sporting instinct, as if the rise of a generation of Forsytes had pushed back the boundary line further and further narrowing the territory of the older tradition. (Besides the characters mentioned in the next paragraph, George Pendyce of *The Country House*, Shelton of *The Island Pharisees*, Lord Miltoun of *The Patrician* represent in various ways aspects of the older tradition which is limned in the novels of Whyte-Melville.)

Among the specific characters in Galsworthy's novels who represent the fashionable sporting society are George Forsyte (*The Man of Property*, Pt. II, Chap. ix) and Montague Dartie (*In Chancery*, Pt. I, Chap. ii) among the older Forsytes, both of them looked upon with disapproval by the clan, and Val Dartie among the younger Forsytes (*Swan Song*, Pt. I, Chaps. ii, iii, and vi, and Pt. II, Chaps. ii and iii). Three characters in Galsworthy's novels

are recognizable throwbacks to the Whyte-Melville era: Jack Muskham in Flowering Wilderness, Charles Clare Winton in Beyond (both described in terms of Whyte-Melville) and Johnny Dromore in The Dark Flower, who is nearly identical as a type with Jack Muskham. (Professor Wagenknecht /work cited, p. 575/ does not discriminate among these types when he says that "the devotion of the Forsytes, and of Galsworthy himself in his unregenerate days, testifies to Whyte-Melville's long popularity with old-fashioned English gentlemen." The only other writer besides Professor Wagenknecht to notice the relationship between Whyte-Melville and Galsworthy is Malcolm Elwin /work cited, p. 287/ who makes specific reference to Young Jolyon and to Jack Muskham.)

Jack Muskham in Flowering Wilderness is described (Chap. ii /Nobel Prize Edition, Vol. VII, End of the Chapter, p. 341/) Mont, his cousin, as

> "Last of the dandies. All the difference in the world, Dinny, between the 'buck,' the 'dandy,' the 'swell,' the 'masher,' the 'blod,' the 'knut,' and what's the last variety called?--I never know. There's been a steady decrescendo. By his age Jack belongs to the 'masher period' but his cut was always pure dandy--a dyed-in-the-wool Whyte-Melville type. How did he strike you?"
>
> "Horses, picquet, and imperturbability."

Muskham is an idealist whose ideal is to create the perfect race-horse (the same work, Chap. xiii /pp. 425-426/).

> In truth, behind this ideal of the "perfect horse," lay the shape of his own soul. Jack Muskham was a formalist, one of the few survivors in a form-shattering age; and that his formalism had pitched on the horse for its conspicuous expression was due in part to the completeness with which the race-horse was tied to the stud book, in part to the refuge the cult of it afforded from the whir, untidiness, glare, blare, unending scepticism, and intrusive blatancy of what he termed "this mongrel age."

On Muskham's shelves, apart from endless volumes relating to the race-horse "were either works of travel or of history, or detective novels; other fiction, with its

scepticism, slangy diction, descriptions, sentiment and sensation, was absent, if an exception be made of complete sets of Surtees, Whyte-Melville, and Thackeray" (the same work, Chap. ii /p. 427/). When Sir Lawrence Mont visits, he comments on the novels )the same work, Chap. xiii /pp. 427-428/).

> "Do I see Surtees and Whyte-Melville entire? Mr. Yule, what did Mr. Waffles say in Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour when they were holding Caingey up by the heels to let the water run out of his pockets and boots?"
>
> Yule's humorous mug expanded, but he was silent.
>
> "Exactly!" said Sir Lawrence: "No one knows nowadays. He said: 'Why Caingey, old boy, you look like a boiled porpoise with parsley sauce.' Yes, and what did Mr. Sawyer answer in Market Harboro, when the Honourable Crasher drove at the turnpike gate, saying: 'It's open, I think'?"
>
> Yule's face, as of indiarubber, expanded further, and he was still more silent.
>
> "Dear, dear! Jack?"
>
> "He said: 'I think not.'"
>
> "Good!" Sir Lawrence sank into a chair. "And was it? No."

Charles Clare Winton, in Galsworthy's Beyond, a soldier, hunting man, a bit of a dandy, one who pays attention to form although he is one who, while preserving something of the precision of a type, had in him a streak of something not typical (Pt. I, Chap. i /Nobel Prize Edition, Vol. V, Three Novels of Love, p. 221/ has a meager library which includes Byron, Whyte-Melville, and Humboldt's 'Cosmos' (the same work, Pt. I, Chap. ii /p. 231/). Later in the story, when his daughter Gyp is in labor, he paces the study. "He went over to the bookcase; there were the few books he ever read, and he took one out. 'Life of General Lee.' He put it back and took another, a novel of Whyte-Melville's: 'Good for Nothing.' Sad book--sad ending!" (the same work, Pt. I, Chap. x /p. 312/).

There is one other point in Galsworthy's novels at which Whyte-Melville's novels are introduced. In the opening scene of The Island Pharisees, Shelton, the sensi-

tive young Englishman, whose rebellion against the closed-in society of which he is a part, is the main interest of the novel, pauses before a book stall before he boards a train. He wavers between "Market Harborough" which he had read "and would certainly enjoy a second time" and Carlyle's French Revolution" which he had not read and was doubtful of enjoying. He finally buys both.

43. Market Harborough, p. 41.

44. The same, p. 43.

45. The same, pp. 55-56.

46. The same, p. 91.

47. The same, p. 119.

48. The same, p. 163.

49. The same, p. 219.

50. Satanella, p. 21.

51. The same, p. 186.

52. The same, Chap. xix.

53. Under Two Flags, Chap. ii.

54. Chap. x, which includes a summary of a dandy's occupation.

55. Guy Livingstone, Chap. v.

56. Under Two Flags, Chap. vii.

57. The same, Chap. i.

58. For Bertie's barracks room, see Chap. i; for his room in Piccadilly, Chap. vii. -- Smart in Bound to Win includes a sportsman dandy, hard underneath but outwardly languid, in the Honourable Jim Laceby, a younger son of the Earl of Mountgayters. He takes things as they come, and sometimes murmurs languidly over his luck. Another languid dandy is the farcically incredible Sir

Charles Coldstream, of Charles Mathews' play, *Used Up*, a play which Whyte-Melville refers to twice in the novels (indirectly by names of characters, Lady Clutterbuck and Sir Charles, evidence of the popularity of the play). Sir Charles is "literally used up--completely blase." (But he has a grip like a vice and can handle a stout blacksmith when need arises.)

59. Chap. v.

60. Compare Chap. xv. "He laid his hand, corded across with a network of tangled sinews, on the table before him, and the stout oak creaked and trembled."

61. "Introduction" to George [Alfred] Lawrence, *Guy Livingstone*, n. d. (Introduction dated 1928), "The Rescue Series," p. viii.

62. Chap. i.

63. Chap. ii.

64. Humphris and Sladen, work cited, p. 121.

65. The same, p. 49.

66. The same, p. 121.

67. The same, p. .

68. The same, p. 95.

69. J. Howlett Ross [or Howlett-Ross], *The Laureate of the Centaurs; a Memoir of the Life of Adam Lindsay Gordon*, 1888, p. 84. Whyte-Melville thought it "equal to Warburton's Cheshire Huntings Songs, or even Charles Kingsley's Riding Stories" (the same place).

70. *Poems*, ed. by Sladen, pp. 79-81.

71. Lines 57-60.

72. *Poems*, ed. by Sladen, p. 22.

73. Humphris and Sladen, p. 144. He liked, as well, Surtees' *Soapy Sponge*.

74. The same, p. 183.

Footnotes Chapter VIII (Continued)

75. Satanella, p. 37.

76. See Henry Kingsley's Austin Elliot throughout.

77. Grant, One of the Six Hundred, Chap. xxii, author's footnote.

78. There is one in the historical novel Holmby House though it is not fatal. See also Digby Grand, Chap. ix; Tilbury Nogo, p. 116; Kate Coventry, p. 297; and M. or N., pp. 299 and 317, for comment about duelling.

79. For Sir Henry's character see Contraband, pp. 5-6, 23, and 238-239. For a Whyte-Melvillean description of the character of a rake, see Black but Comely, p. 211.

80. Chap. xvi.

81. Guy Livingstone, Chap. xiii.

82. The same place.

83. Ravenshoe, Chap. lii.

84. Here the writer is willing to accept Ellis' judgment when he decribes this character as "the most self-depreciating, kindly, courteous, bravest of soldiers" and calls the narrative of "this beautiful love affair" the "gem of the book" (Victorian Novelists, p. 199).

# CHAPTER IX

## OTHER TYPES OF GENTLEMAN

### Section (1) The Officer

Although the battlefield scenes of General Bounce and The Interpreter are immaturely handled and although Whyte-Melville abandons the battle front as a subject in succeeding novels of contemporary life, the figure of the officer as a man of honor and a gentleman recurs throughout the novels. Occasionally it is the young man who is presented as a type to be approved, as in General Bounce (Charles Kettering) or even among the later novels as in Contraband. (Frank Vanguard). Frank Vanguard's creed is

> to ride a comrade's horse 'truly through' in a steeplechase; to make the most of his own in a run; to lead his squadron straight, and as fast as his colonel would permit; to have his troop at the highest possible pitch of efficiency, befriending the men, pacifying their wives, and keeping an especial eye on buckles; to drive the regimental coach without 'putting it over,' and never to turn his back on a friend.[2]

Although the fripperies of dandyism struck Whyte-Melville as false frequently enough, he does not give evidence of perceiving the inadequacy of such a creed even to solve such problems of unrest and discrepancy between ideal and actuality as he himself consciously records. Beside such a credo Vivian Grey's remark, as he thinks over his career before going to Oxford, seems fully substantiated: "The

services in war times are fit only for desperadoes . . . but, in peace, are fit only for fools."[3] And Surtees speaks irritably of the "hobbling, frosty-pated, wound-scarred old cocks of the Peninsular."[4]

Yet with the old cocks of the Peninsular campaign and of the Crimea, Whyte-Melville achieves more, partly, perhaps, because of the restraint natural to the characters themselves: General Bounce in the novel to which he gives his name,[5] Sir Archibald Brooke (_The Brookes of Bridlemere_), General St. Josephs (_Satanella_), and General Pike (_Uncle John_), with whom in nature should be mentioned the narrator of _Good for Nothing_ and Uncle John.[6] Sir Archibald Brooke is characteristic, although his career has been somewhat more Byronic than that sketched for others, a life of restless adventure in the Near East after disappointment in love.

> Sir Archibald, then, was a good bit over fifty; but, like many men who have spent their youth in a life of constant toil and hardship, he seemed rather to have hardened and toughened from repeated kneading than worn by the friction of continuous use. His walk was springy and elastic; his frame very spare and muscular. Every atom of superfluous flesh seemed to have been absorbed by exercise, or drained from his system by the action of tropical heat. His very face was but skin and bone. Skin tanned, bronzed, and wrinkled; bone harsh, angular, and prominent. The whole clean shaved, all but a heavy moustache, which like his hair, was rapidly turning white. Nevertheless, there was beauty still, and that of an engaging kind, in the old, worn face.[7]

Sir Archibald's long disciplined sense of honor and his long hidden sentiment for Nell Brooke's mother preserve the family from disaster during the course of the story. If, in Roy's Wife, when Collingwood Brail is received by the Prince at a levee, the details seem excessive and sentimental--

> A colonel of the Guards, with an empty sleeve, put out his remaining hand; a vice-admiral of the red, bravest among the brave, noted for his hilarity of spirits at the most critical moments, patted him kindly on the back; while a dashing hussar, maimed, shattered, tanned to the bronze of his own Victoria Cross, asked him to dinner that very day.[8]

--his portrait of General St. Josephs in Satanella[9] is the most effective of those outside Market Harborough.

Besides providing a gentleman's code of honor, the Army, in Whyte-Melville's novels, provides stability and trusted company. Lord Bearwarden in M. or N. will do anything for Maud but give up his commission, for when he had been betrayed once before by a woman, he had found steadfast loyalty and unquestioning and undemanding friendship only among his fellow officers.[10] More than once in the novels an officer turns to his fellows as the natural and certain support in stress.[11] Further, in a confusing world where the path of duty is not always clear, the service, particularly the foreign service, provides in these stories a way of life with obligations, duties, self-respect, and dignity if a man can be certain of only two

things, his courage and his honor.[12]

## Section (2) The Sportsman[13]

Closely related to the Whyte-Melvillean picture of the gentleman, the dandy, and the officer, is the picture of the sportsman, particularly of the horseman.[14] As passages in *Riding Recollections* indicate, horsemanship is to Whyte-Melville a matter of character as well as skill, and nearly all his young men ride, some daringly and recklessly, almost all at least well. It is in fact almost a flaw in a man's character that he does not manage a horse with instinctive tact and precision. Dandy Burton of *The White Rose* though a dandy by manner and gentleman by position is not trustworthy. In the first place, he leaves the Life Guards after but a short service. "Truth to tell, the dandy was not quite a good enough fellow for the Household Brigade, with whom no amount of coxcombry will go down unless it conceals frank manliness of character beneath its harmless affectations."[15] So that it apparently substantiates a suspicion when the novelist records later that Burton though a rider was not a horseman.

> The former merely suffers himself to be carried; the latter both gives and receives excitement, spirit, and energy from the exhilarating partnership of man and beast. He, whose home is in the saddle, feels equal to all emergencies when in his favourite position; his courage rises, his shyness vanishes, his self-reliance is redoubled, he feels twice the man, and he never looks to such advantage as on horseback.[16]

But though the Dandy has passed through his riding-school drill[17] creditably enough, he feels more confidence on foot.

### Section (3) The Gentleman Manque.

In Digby Grand, the central character renounced dandyism for trade, and at the end of the volume speaks in praise of the life of usefulness and sobriety. Several characters in the early novels carry on this tradition and appear in sharp contrast to the gallant dandies, particularly Frank Hardingstone of General Bounce, John Gordon of Good for Nothing, and the Stoney Brothers and Jack Brooke of The Brookes of Bridlemere. Jack Brooke is the only portrait of a young country gentleman in the novels, that is a young country gentleman who actually attends to his property. Frank Hardingstone like other characters in General Bounce is undeveloped; no explanation is given to his character as a gentleman of leisure engaged in serious pursuits, particularly engineering.[18] But in John Gordon who is a partner in business with Alderman Jones and in the Stoney brothers who own a beer plant, Whyte-Melville ostensibly broadens his range of sympathy and interest to include the middle class and its problems.

Actually there is no extension, but rather a further probing of the nature of the "gentleman," and the result does not escape from the limits of an aristocratic

conception. John Gordon is a gentleman born, a merchant by necessity, with plans of restoring his position and marrying the Lady Gertrude. (Even the Jones family, in the same book, rises in the world, for after the Alderman dies, Bella marries Lord Holyhead.) The Stoney brothers are not exceptions to the generalization. Whyte-Melville takes pains to point out two kinds of men in trade,[19] "those to whom business is their natural element," and who "thrive and grow fat upon it," and those to whom business is a necessity, "who stand at the desk, when they would fain be breasting a mountain, and long for the saddle, while perched high on an office stool," and who grow old before their time. George Stoney is one of these.

> Refined in character, cautious, and a little indolent of disposition, shrinking almost sensitively from everything noisy, exaggerated, or in bad taste, averse even to so much of strife as must constitute the necessary competition of trade, he was a dreamer--almost a poet in heart; though externally, in dress, manner, and habits, as prosaic a personage as it is possible even for the British merchant to be.[20]

The author side-steps the problem of trade and the middle class equally with George's younger brother Phil, for while George is the gentleman-scholar manque, Phil is the sportsman manque, what Whyte-Melville calls "an Englishman all over--a pure-bred Anglo-Saxon as ever stopped a cricket-ball in flannels," though the author considers him representative of "the thousands of Englishmen who

constitute the upper and middle classes of our happy country."[21]

What precise reassurance this interpretation is intended to give is not completely obvious. Apparently he is more concerned at this point to reassure those who are gentleman-born that though they may take to trade out of necessity, they still remain gentlemen, than to reassure those in trade that they are by nature gentlemen and that birth and position do not matter. (In his sketch of Charles Kettering and Frank Lovell, and in his sketch of the history of the Brooke family, Whyte-Melville comments rather pointedly on the fact that the characters concerned, though well-bred and of aristocratic connection, are not far removed from trade connections. His intention--which seems in these passages to be mildly satirical--is ambivalent here, too. It is quite probable that his very mildness contributed to his popularity.

## Section (4) Others: Gentlemen All.

Several characters do not fall conveniently in the officer-dandy-sportsman class. One group will be discussed in the next section. The others consist for the most part of amiable, kindly and honest men of different kinds who support their friends in need and are rewarded apparently by a placid and contented existence: Lord Holyhead[22] in _Good for Nothing_ and Charles "Dolly"

Egremont of The White Rose, among them. Some of them are officers whose dandyism and sporting prowess is subordinated to their friendly office as comrades in need: Ragman de Rolle in The Brookes of Bridlemere and Soldier Bill in Satanella, and Algy the guardsman in Black but Comely.[23] In the later novels few of the central characters are young bloods: the lovers are older, more hesitant, more reserved, more nearly victims of the women they love, but most of them patient, considerate, often pathetic in their tact and kindness, all of them gentlemen: Mr. Goldthred in Contraband, General St. Josephs in Satanella, the Rev. Algernon Lexley in Uncle John, James Paravant and the Rev. Mervyn Strange in Black but Comely.[24]

## Section (5) Not Quite a Gentleman.

It is quite in accordance with the pervasive awareness of the concept of the gentleman in Whyte-Melville's novels that the villains of the stories are almost always identifiable as men who are "not quite gentlemen." Most frequent of types is the adventurer of unknown background who mingles with the fashionable men, not in their homes, perhaps, but very nearly on their own level in Rotten Row, at the race track, on the hunting field, and as visitor at the barracks and the officers' mess. The most prominent of these are Latimer of Good for Nothing, Multiple of The Brookes of Bridlemere, Picard of Contraband,

and Dalton of Uncle John.[25] Levanter of Digby Grand is an early sketch, but he began as an officer. Ropsley of The Interpreters and Ryfe of M. or N. are sketches of such men in youth (the others are introduced without a past, except such immediate past as becomes pertinent to the plot).

Fast and sometimes dashing when they make their appearance, these men are spotted with unerring accuracy by the most callow of cornets as not quite gentlemen or, if the speaker is slangy, not quite clean potatoes. Digby Grand says of Levanter that he looked a handsome fellow enough, "but wanted something I could not describe--a sort of finish, to give him the real air of a gentleman,"[26] and when he sees him later comments that the restless, eager expression of his countenance was now sharper than ever, and "this it was, with a certain forward air, as of one who rather assumes than maintains his position in society, which prevented his ever appearing thoroughly like a gentleman."[27] Ropsley of The Interpreter (unlike his successor Ryfe) though poor is of good family and has attended one of the smaller public schools. So though Ropsley differs in no discernible way from Ryfe of M. or N. (who not only is not from a good family but has not gone to public school), the damning phrase is never directly applied to him. Latimer in Good for Nothing is more easily spotted by the ladies than by the gentlemen. Every

woman, on first meeting him "vowed she considered him bad style,"[28] and "one very great lady" needed only one careful look to be convinced "that he had not the slightest pretensions to the character of a gentleman."[29] Later, when Gilbert Orme and John Gordon meet him in the Australian bush, he puzzles them: "Without quite coming up to the standard of a gentleman in the somewhat fastidious opinions of Orme and Gordon, he had evidently the trick and turn of speech habitual to certain circles, and which, once attained, is never lost again."[30] Helen Brooke spots Multiple immediately when she meets him at the stile, although he was good-looking and not in what could fairly be called a flash or vulgar style."[31] But despite this and the clearly well-made clothes[32] Helen is not impressed: "'Not quite a gentleman,' said Helen to herself, as the man made way for her, and lifted his hat with a flourish."[33] In M. or N. it is Dick Stanmore who applies the phrase to Ryfe. At a breakfast party, Dick comes upon Miss Bruce receiving the "attentions of another guest, more smart than gentlemanlike, in whose appearance there was something indefinably out of keeping with the rest."[34] Tom Ryfe, the author explains later, "knew all the sporting men about London, but not their wives."[35] In Uncle John Nokes and Stokes are beaten at billiards by Dalton. After Dalton leaves, Nokes observes, "He's a deuced pleasant fellow. . . But there's something about him, too, that isn't quite the

clean potato."[36] Similarly in Contraband, Picard is recognized for what he is by a young cornet just out of Eton. One young officer calls him pleasant company and asks "Who the devil is he, Jack?" Jack replies with deliberation, "Not quite the clean potato, young man, you may take my word for it."[37] Even Kate Cremorne who lives outside the circle of Belgravia tells her "Auntie" that "he's not a gentleman. Look at him by the others; you see it at once."[38] (Considering that Kate is a fast young woman herself and more to be respected for her kind heart than her propriety, this seems unfair, though not as unfair as Jane's comment to herself in Black but Comely that Mr. Delapre "is not a gentleman. . . I never quite thought he was."[39] For Jane, a gypsy foundling brought up by a Jew, has just borrowed five hundred pounds on the strength of her acceptance of a proposal of marriage, has disappeared with the money, and is now posing before the theatre manager as a woman of fashion.

Picard of Contraband may be taken as representative of the type.

> He was good-looking, well-dressed, plausible, always ready to eat, drink, smoke, dance, play, or, indeed, partake in the amusement of the hour. He looked like a gentleman, but nobody knew who he was. He seemed to have a sufficiency of money, but nobody knew where he got it. The Court Guide vouched for him as J. Picard, Esq., under the letter "P" with two addresses, a first-rate hotel, and a third-rate club. The Morning Post even took charge of him in its fashionable arrivals and departures. Men began to

> know him after the Epsom Spring, and by Hampton Races he had ceased to arouse interest, scarcely even excited curiosity, but had failed to make a single female acquaintance above the class of Mrs. Battersea; nor had he, indeed, gained one step of the social ladder people take such pains to climb, in order to obtain, after all, but a wider view from Dan to Beersheba.
>
> Such men crop up like mushrooms at the beginning of every season, and fade like annuals with the recess. Goodwood sees the last expiring blaze of their splendor, and next year, if you ask for them, they are extinct; but, as the Highland soldier says, "there are plenty more where they come from." In dress, style, manner, they vary but little. All dine constantly at Richmond, shoot well, and drive a team, in the handling of which they improve vastly as the season wears on.[70]

Mr. Picard has an additional fascination for the young officer at the barracks in his character as soldier-adventurer, and his tales of service with the Confederate Army in the American war between the states, supported by a gash on his cheek which could only be a sabre-cut. ("Somehow," the novelist comments, "every soldier-adventurer, concerned in that war seems to have been a Southerner."[41] The personal appearance of these characters is given in greater detail in The Brookes of Bridlemere. Mr. Multiple

> was a good-looking fellow too, and not in what could be called a flashy or vulgar style. Helen . . . observed that he had heavy, well-shaped features, small dark eyes, and large dark whiskers, a coarse mouth, very good teeth, a great deal of jewellery, and a remarkably bright colour; that his clothes were perfectly well-made. . ., and though in no way remarkable, were of a fashion and material more adapted for town than country wear. She could not but admit that his figure was strong and well-proportioned, though a little inclined to corpulence, and that the bare hand in which he held his cigar was very plump and white, adorned, moreover, with a diamond ring of

> no small value; such a ring as is usually displayed in the foreground of professional men's portraits, meditating, under crimson canopies, in irreproachable linen and suits of glossy black.[42]

Most of these men are complete scoundrels who go from bad to worse, ruined by gambling or caught finally by wild speculations, frequently attempting to gain a foothold in society by forcing marriage upon a woman by some hold, usually financial, over her (or her father). But the defeat which these villains invariably suffer in Whyte-Melville's novels seems in no way inevitable. Some are simply adventurers, some have semi-professional side-lines which may be respectable (Tom Ryfe is chief clerk for his uncle, a lawyer) or not (Mr. Multiple is a money-lender).

Few cracks appear in the enamel of these hardened men of the world. The nearest the novelist comes to indicating that they are not necessarily all black and of a type is to attribute momentary sentiment to them in pathetic situations. When Latimer deserts Ada in Good for Nothing, the patient woman makes him a gift of her jewelry, her last possession.

> Deserted, and in poverty, she could still despoil herself for the sake of one who had caused her unvarying sorrow and discomfort. This time the tears fairly filled Latimer's eyes.
>
> "What a trump that girl is! said he, with so loud an oath as to startle even the imperturbable cabman who drove him. "Why couldn't I like her better? Why couldn't I? Confound it! you're far better without me! but I'll never part with the bracelet, my poor Ada! Never, as long as I live, never!"[43]

Nor does he until on his last legs in Australia he wants to make a provision not for himself but for a woman who has stood by him with dog-like fidelity. Similarly in Contraband, Picard shows that he could be a better man by his devotion to his son, although when his schemes collapse around his head, he is quite willing to leave the boy with Jin. When Picard meets Jin who is running away with the boy whom Picard has been watching over.

> Bending over that little bundle, folded so carefully in his pea-jacket, on its mother's knee, he kissed the soft brow tenderly, gently, almost reverently, while a tear hanging in the man's shaggy whiskers dropped on the pure delicate cheek of the child.
>
> "No wonder I loved you, he muttered. "I wish I had been a better man for your sake."[44]

But shortly after he is "ashamed of his feelings, as such men usually are ashamed of any one redeeming point in a character saturated with evil."[45]

Whyte-Melville's sketch of Tom Ryfe in M. or N. is the most promising of his pictures of these men who are "not quite gentlemen." From his father, "of whom nobody knew more than that he could shoot pigeons, had been concerned in one or two doubtful turf transactions, and played a good hand at whist," Tom Ryfe inherited "sporting propensities, with a certain slang smartness of tone and manner, acquired in those circles where horseflesh is affected as an inducement to speculation."[46] His maternal uncle, Mr. Bargrave, takes Tom in after the death of his parents, and when the novels opens, Tom is confidential

clerk and head manager of the firm, cock-sure, determined to make his way in fashionable society, and to marry shrewdly. On his way to Ecclesfield Manor where he is to meet Maud, he reflects on his affairs of the heart:

> He reflected with great satisfaction on his own fastidious rejection of several "suitable parties," as he expressed it, who did not quite reach his standard of aristocratic perfection, remembering how Mrs. Blades, the well-to-do widow, with fine eyes and a house in Duke Street, had fairly landed him but for that unfortunate dinner at which he detected her eating fish with a knife; how certain grated-looking needle-marks on Miss Glance's left forefinger had checked him just in time while in that act of kissing her hand; and how, on the very eve of a proposal to beautiful Constance de Courcy, whose manner, bearing, and appearance, no less than her name, denoted the extreme of refinement and high birth, he had sustained a shock, galvanic but salutary, from her artless exclamation, "Oh my! whatever shall I do? If here isn't pa!"[47]

(Such a betrayal means more to Tom who is not a gentleman but is a snob, than to Mr. Roy in Roy's Wife, who is a gentleman but no more of a snob than a Victorian English gentleman must be by nature. When Mr. Roy proposes to Nelly Burton who helps her aunt run a boarding house, he gets a similar shock but is man enough to distinguish between natural gentility and mere manner:

> "Ever since the first night I saw you at dinner,--I --I have thought you the handsomest, and the dearest, and the nicest woman in the world."
>
> "Lor'!"
>
> What it a disillusion? He hardly knew. Lady Jane, he remembered, under similar circumstances, exclaimed, "How can you be so foolish?" But at any rate he had got the steam on, and it was too late to stop now.)[48]

Although Tom's forward possessiveness and his making a financial bargain of a matter of the heart presumably deserve Maud's cruel treatment, her contemptuous superiority leaves something to be said for the lawyer's clerk. At one point Tom makes the mistake of reminding her of the written promise which he has locked in his box. She tells him proudly that to lose her freedom is to lose all that makes life endurable. She has lost it Tom reminds her, for although "very brave, very high-minded, very chivalrous in his way" he also possesses the "truly British quality of tenacity, and did not mean to be shaken off by any feminine vagaries where once he had taken hold." Miss Bruce though has the last word: "'Et je payerais de ma personne,' replied Miss Bruce scornfully. "I don't suppose you know any French. You must go now, Mr. Ryfe; my maid's coming back for me from the bonnet-shop."[49] And Miss Bruce continues to keep the upper hand. At her Aunt's at-home, she refuses to dance with Tom. Tom reminds her that

> "you and I, Miss Bruce, have something more than a mere dancing acquaintance, I think."
>
> An impatient movement, a slight curl of the lip, was the only answer.
>
> You may drop an acquaintance when you are tired of him, or a friend when he gets troublesome. It's done every day. It's very easy, Miss Bruce."
>
> He spoke in a tone of irony that roused her.

> "Not so easy, she answered with tightening lips, "when people have no tact--when they are not gentlemen."
>
> The taunt went home.[50]

Although a young snob and schemer, Tom has lost his heart completely. Perhaps one of the most justifiable touches of sentiment in the novels is that which Tom feels when he discovers that it was Maud who had had him waylaid and robbed (for the promissory note) and that while he has lain ill recovering from the attack, she has become Lady Bearwarden.

> "I'll see if I can't give tit-for-tat and spoil your little game, my haughty lady, with your white face and your cursed high-handed airs. Yet, how I loved them--how I loved them! . . .And I would have been so different if you had cared for me; I might have made a better gentleman than any of them. As for that empty-headed cousin . . . .and that swaggering lord, can they care for you like /sic/ I did?"[51]

Despite the ungentlemanly solecism, Tom has some justice on his side. But the novelist turns him into a theatrical villain ("Curse you! I'll have no mercy!") and gives up his chance to develop the contradictions of Tom's character. Tom continues to frequent those fashionable places which are open to him. His "sporting propensities" provide this entry, and he is one of "those men rarely seen in the saddle or on the box, but who, nevertheless, always seem to have a horse to dispose of, whatever be the kind required."

> Mr. Ryfe knew all the sporting men about London, but not their wives. He was at home on the Downs and the Heath, in the pavilion at Lord's, and behind the traps of the Red House. He dined pretty frequently at the

> barracks of the Household troops, welcome to the genial spirits of his entertainers chiefly for those qualities with which they themselves credited him; and he called Bearwarden "My lord," wherefore that nobleman thought him a snob, and would perhaps have considered him a still greater if he had not.[52]

When he turns Tom Ryfe into a theatrical villain, Whyte-Melville abandons the opportunity to handle the ironies (and with them the genuine pathos) of the social predicament of the young climber--who is called a snob when he addresses a nobleman as "My lord," and a greater one if he does not. Tom is shrewd and does not lack natural qptitude, but is defeated at the start because he lacks an indefinable quality which makes the "gentleman." Fashionable life demands, apparently, particular manners and habits, yet Tom's very imitation of these marks him as a snob and a climber, and no gentleman.

Footnotes CHAPTER IX

1. See discussion above, Chap. viii, Sec. 2.

2. Contraband, p. 115. For another similar passage see General Bounce, p. 239.

3. Vivian Grey, Bk I, Chap. viii.

4. Quoted by Steel, work cited, p. 8.

5. See particularly pp. 62 and 204.

6. Compare also Licinius, the old Roman general in The Gladiators.

7. Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 103.

8. Roy's Wife, p. 221

9. See discussion below, Chap. xv, Sec. 2.

10. M. or N., pp. 120-121.

11. For scenes of camp and barracks life, see particularly Digby Grand, Chaps. i-iii, xix; General Bounce, Chap. xi; The Interpreter, Chaps. xxxix; The Brookes of Bridlemere, Chaps. ii, xii; M. or N., p. 120; Contraband, Chap. vii; Satanella, Chaps. xvii, xxiii; Uncle John, Chap. xiv. For other young officers in the novels see below, Chap. ix, Sec. 1 and 4.

12. See, for example, the account of Gaston D'Orville, above, Chap. viii, Sec. 1.

13. For further discussion of horsemanship and sport see below Chap. xiv, Sec. 2 and Chap. xv.

14. Compare the earlier intellectual dandy of Bulwer and Disraeli. Disraeli's Vivian Grey, for example, says (Bk. II, Chap. ix): "I have no time for killing birds and jumping over ditches: good work enough for country squires, who must, like all others, have their hours of excitement." And Bulwer's Pelham (Chap. lxi): "I have always transgressed my general rule of knowing all men in all grades, in the single respect of sporting characters: they were a species of bipeds that I would never recognize as belonging to the human race." Surtees had little use for games of any kind, including racing, which he attacks, and barely admires horsemanship for its own sake, though, of course, he did not share the intellectual dandy's

contempt for country fox-hunting (Steel, work cited, p. 3). Except for the sketch in Inside the Bar of Jovial Jim, there are no sporting characters like Jack Ricket in Mills' Our Country, Bk. I, Chap. iv, who is the rival and antagonist of the young gentleman dandy and nearly ruins him: he can "palm a card, throw a nick to every main, run, jump, ride, drive, shoot, and swim. Plays billiards, pool and cribbage. Can throw a summerset, fight, and wrestle. He can cut a trump, secure a die, hide the pea, swallow sugared oysters, and blow the key bugle."

15. The White Rose, pp. 224-225.

16. The same, p. 253. Compare Henry Kingsley, Hillyars and the Burtons, Chap. xliv. Charles Morton at Oxford "got on horseback and stayed there; and henceforth the history of the man's life is to a great extent, the history of his horses."

17. The riding school is not mentioned in the novels, and most horsemen and horsewomen seem to have ridden since childhood. But Maxwell (Introduction to Katerfelto, pp. xi-xii) comments on the elegancies of the haute ecole and talks of "manege versus "natural" horsemanship, believing that Whyte-Melville did not disdain the former.

18. Frank's inadequacy as a man of fashion is subject for amusement, and he hovers in the background at the race track, in Rotten Row, in the ball room, even in the drawing room in the house in Grosvenor Square while the dandies cluster around Blanche.

19. Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 46.

20. The same, p. 47.

21. The same, p. 4.

22. There are few actual aristocrats in the novels, Lord Holyhead is one. In many of the early novels the aristocrats are subjects for satire: Sir Ascot Uppercrust, the Lord Mount Helicon in General Bounce, for example. Others are middle-aged roues (Lord St. Helier in Digby Grand and Lord St. Moritz in Black but Comely, to name two at opposite ends of the sequence of novels.

23. Ragman de Rolle is infatuated with the Duchess, Soldier Bill and Algy with the young widows Mrs.

Lushington and Mrs. Stripwell, a stock situation in the society novel, the widow getting the double pleasure of a sentimental attachment and motherly guidance of the young innocent. See Rosa, work cited, p. 27.

24. See discussion of these below, Chap. xvii.

25. For a similar character in the nobles of Henry Kingsley, see George Hawker of Geoffrey Hamlyn, who is not quite a gentleman and comes to a bad end as a desperado in Australia.

26. Digby Grand, p. 18.

27. The same, p. 227.

28. Good for Nothing, p. 42.

29. The same place.

30. The same work, p. 215.

31. The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 80.

32. "You must remember," Whyte-Melville hastens to add lest the reader think Helen too worldly-wise, "Helen had two brothers, one of them a dandy by profession."

33. The same work, p. 87.

34. M. or N., p. 80.

35. The same place.

36. Uncle John, p. 230.

37. Contraband, p. 75. It is repetitions of this sort in many different details which makes the reader feel, when he reads a new Whyte-Melville novel that he has really read it before, or that he is reading several novels simultaneously.

38. Contraband, p. 310.

39. Black but Comely, p. 83.

40. Contraband, pp. 80-81.

Footnotes Chapter IX (Continued)

41. The same place.
42. The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 87.
43. Good for Nothing, p. 49.
44. Contraband, p. 265.
45. The same place.
46. M. or N., p. 27.
47. The same work, p. 30.
48. Roy's Wife, p. 31.
49. M. or N., p. 69.
50. The same, p. 182.
51. The same, p. 206.
52. The same, p. 115.

# CHAPTER X

## The West End of London

### Section (1) The Picture of the Seasons.

Chief background to the novels of Whyte-Melville is the fashionable section of Mid-Victorian London, Grosvenor Square, Mayfair, Picadilly, Tyburnia, and Belgravia[1]--particularly Belgravia. From about May to the middle of July[2] the fashionable society gathered "within the confines of a dozen London Squares,"[3] for the "season." As the middle of the century passed, these dozen squares became a kind of fortress against the encroachment of the growing middle class, and the "families" by the 1860's had "withdrawn from London or hidden themselves behind the solemn porticoes of Belgravia."[4] But even such a localized defense was not impregnable. Whyte-Melville records a movement westward, Kate Coventry (1856) lived in Grosvenor Square[5] as did Blanche Kettering just before her.[6] But fifteen years later the novelist speaks of "those remoter regions of London which are to Belgravia what Belgravia must once have been to Grosvenor Square, and Mrs. Battersea who lives to the westward beyond the exclusive boundary contends that "when the real respectables, dowager peeresses and those sort of people moved down to her" she would clear out farther west.[7] Certainly

the publication of a magazine, Belgravia, edited by the popular novelist Mrs. Braddon (1867) suggests a dangerous invasion of the privacy of this strong-hold.[8]

Nor, for Whyte-Melville's purpose is the London season a static fact, for the rhythm of the beginning, progress, and end of the London season alternating with the hunting season is the basic structural rhythm of novel after novel.[9] From the novels an anthology of passages recording the course of the season could easily be drawn. "In February London begins to awake out of its winter sleep. Some of the great houses have already got their blinds up, and their doorsteps cleaned. Well-known faces are hurrying about the streets, and a few equestrains spot the Ride, like early flies crawling over a window-pane."[10] By the middle of May and early June the season is well under way. (Jin Ross and Rose Lascelles planning joint battle against the other sex, start on the war path before Easter; by the middle of May they are successful and in full swing.[11] By June the country is deserted as the city had been a few months before. The exodus from the country is not without rebellion. "Year after year has the squire sworn stoutly that he will enjoy this summer at home, and perjured himself, as a man invariably does when he attests by oath an opinion in defiance of his wife."[12] For there are daughters to marry off and sons to get commissions for, and the noble aim of keeping up one's acquaintances "brings

families to London when their strawberries are ripe, and their roses in full bloom. The Hall looks beautiful when its old trees are in foliage, and its sunny meadows rippled with the freshmown hay."[13] But "who would be out of London in June? except, of course, during Ascot week."

> No, the gardener and the steward are left to enjoy one of the sweetest places in England, and the family hug themselves in the exchange of their roomy chambers, and old oak wainscoting, and fresh country air, for a small, close, ill-constructed house, redolent of those mysterious perfumes which are attributed to drains, and grimy with a year's accumulation of soot and other impurities, but happy, thrice happy in its situation--not a quarter of a mile from St. James' Street, and within a stone's-throw of Berkeley Square! 14

So the rush and crush of the breakfast, lunches, at-homes, dinners, balls, theatre parties, excursions, continues until the season draws to a close in July, the fashionable races providing a kind of clock for the passage of time. "Town never seems really full till just before the Derby,"[15] and single men seldom go to town much before then.[16] Then comes Ascot and the exodus to the neighborhood of Windsor. "After Ascot, people begin to think about going away; and before you know where you are, three more weeks have elapsed, and it is July."[17] Then some are off to Norway, some to Cowes, some to Caithness, and some to Galway. "Those that remain for Goodwood are sure to go to Newmarket."[18] But the fashionable families do not get away before waning summer brings heat "increased to an intensity almost tropical."[19]

> There are few parts of Europe where the atmosphere can be more suffocating than in London during the dog-days, although while everybody goes about gasping, fainting, bewailing the temperature, nobody seems to dream of putting off ball, drum, dinner, or other festive gatherings to a cooler date.
>
> The July sun glared pitilessly down on square, street, and crescent, to be refracted with tenfold power from walls and pavements: the Park was a burnished waste, Mayfair an oven, and Belgravia a furnace.[20]

Whyte-Melville's sketch of the London season develops clearly in the early novels, and the details already limned in Digby Grand and General Bounce remain essentially unchanged throughout the series.[21] A complete picture emerges in the series of novels which leaves odd blank spaces for the reader to fill in. The impression upon the reader is that he is looking upon the life going on before him from the outside: he does not enter into domestic family life in its daily relationships but comes to it, as it were, only during visiting hours.[22] The public appearances of the younger and the older[23] are recorded: crowded staircases, ballrooms during at-homes and dances; the opera stall and theatre box; rides in Rotten Row and the Park; gatherings of sporting people at Tattersall's and at Epsom Downs; picnics and excursions to Richmond Park and Greenwich; meetings in St. James' Street at the clubs; military affairs at barracks and mess hall, Hyde Park and Knightsbridge. But of the intimacies of family existence nothing at all. Even those intimacies

which are pictured are the intimacies of people apart from some domestic circle: intimacies in the theatre box, perhaps, or at Richmond Park; or intimacies in the drawing room[24] of young women who are independent of family ties, young widows, or self-possessed girls long since orphaned, perhaps watched over now by a maiden aunt (at the most by a widower father) or completely unprotected.[25] But never does the reader follow the daily activities, domestic as well as fashionable, throughout a day nor is he introduced to his characters _en toute famille_. (The nearest approach to this is an occasional scene at a country house which usually takes on the aspect of a house party rather than a family circle.)[26] Purely male domesticity appears somewhat more frequently, but even here not intimately. (There is nothing in the novels like the scenes between Major Pendennis and Morgan in detail, for example.) The reader sees club-life from the outside, walking down St. James Street, occasionally entering a club with some member to get mail or have an urgent conference with another club member.[26] Barracks life both in London (Knightsbridge) and in the provinces is given in more detail,[27] and the reader comes to know the appearance of barracks rooms and the daily routine of parade and guard duty, of dinners and military reminiscence ("pipeclay"), and excursions into the fashionable world and into sporting and gambling.

## Section (2) Drums and At-Homes

A few aspects of the London season become focal centers for the action of the novels, most prominently the fashionable and crowded parties (which may be "breakfasts"[28] or morning musicals,[29] or at-homes and balls)[30] and the equally fashionable and crowded gatherings in the Ride, "Rotten Row". Nearly as central are the theatre or opera party, and the excursion to the race track.

Crowded staircases and jammed reception rooms provide the novelist with materials for somewhat heavy but convincing satire on the doings of the fashionable world:

> There is a certain rite performed by the upper classes during the hottest part of the London season, of which, to the uninitiated, it would be difficult to explain the advantages or the end. This solemnity, which has been in vogue for a good many years, was called by our grandmothers a rout, whereas modern irreverence, by an equally martial and inexplicable metaphor, designates it a drum! Its chief characteristic seems to be suffocation under certain restrictions, and it would appear to have been originally intended by some rigorous ascetics for the practice of mortification and self-denial, moral as well as physical. The votaries, arriving at as late an hour as possible, sit for a considerable period in their respective vehicles, preparing, as it would seem, in darkness and solitude, for the approaching ordeal, and emerge, under the immediate guidance of a policeman, where awning and foot-cloth are spread to protect the magnificance of their attire. Wedged in considerable masses, the next step is to contest a staircase inch by inch with a throng of ladies and gentlemen all at a high temperature, until by the exercise of patience, forbearance, and no small amount of physical strength, a distant doorway is eventually attained. Here the presiding priestess, enjoying the comparative freedom of breathing-space and elbow-room, stands to receive the homage of her guests; and

> when a formal bow has been tendered and returned, the whole object of the ceremonials would seem to have been accomplished, and nothing more remains but a second struggle for freedom, open air, and the friendly light of the carriage-lamps. Recognition, for persons of average altitude, is impracticable. Conversation beyond begging pardon for crushing, impossible. If friends are jammed against friends, the very juxtaposition forbids colloquial ease; and if ten yards apart, they are as effectually separated as if they were in different streets. The heat is intense, the physical labour considerable. Great lassitude and fatigue are the immediate results; and yet there is, doubtless, some hidden charm, some inexplicable advantage consequent on these gatherings, else how can we account for the eagerness with which they are sought, and the patience with which they are endured?[31]

It is a double drama that Whyte-Melville finds in such a scene, the one romantic the other satirical.

> How many a formal greeting masks a heart that thrills, and a pulse that leaps, to the tone of somebody's voice, or the rustle of somebody's dress! How many a careless inquiry, being interpreted, signifies a volume of protestation or a torrent of reproach! With what electric speed can eager eyes, from distant corners, flash the expected telegram along the wires of mutual intelligence, through a hundred unconscious bystanders, and make two people happy who have not exchanged one syllable in speech![32]

But in addition to the romance of the younger, there is the mean competition of the older, and above all, the carefully calculated eligibility of those who are invited and those who invite. Of great importance is the "glazed cardboard, entitling the recipient to stand in full dress on a crowded staircase for two or three hours of a summer's night."

> If he be a family man, rejoicing in a vine and olive branches, an expensive wife and blooming daughters, they will explain to him if they have not impressed on him already, how such a cartel constitutes a

> veritable diploma, the full reward for many months of competitive energy and serious application. They will tell him how to be seen at Lady Olivia's is a recognition of that position which entitled them to call on Lady Barthedore, that Lady Barthedore's intimates have the *entree* to Ormolu House, and that from Ormolu House to the seventh heaven is but one step.[33]

Although Whyte-Melville depends upon such descriptive passages for his effects in handling such scenes, he is capable of more expert dramatization of the situation, as in *Contraband*, when Helen has waited all evening for Frank to appear, nearly to miss him, but to engineer a brief encounter in the parting crush, time enough for a whispered encouragement.[34] Or in *Satanella* when Mrs. Lushington manages to get the pale and resigned Blanche Douglas, struggling to be loyal to her General, aside long enough to deliver a fatal thrust by passing on to her with malicious cheerfulness the news of Daisy Walter's approaching marriage to the Irish girl.[35] Or in *Black but Comely* (repeating almost without change but with more skill a scene first written seventeen years earlier in *Good for Nothing*)[36] when Lord St. Moritz complains to Lady Goneril (his recent mistress) of the inconsideration shown him by Mrs. Stripwell (his present mistress):

> "There are some people from the West of England I wish to be civil to. I don't suppose you ever heard of them. [They are the talk of the season.] They know positively nobody, and I have reasons for wanting to do *him* a turn. [Lord St. Moritz is very much enamoured of *her*], so I asked Mrs. Stripwell to leave her card, and she positively refused."

> "I have heard of them. A vulgar man with a vulgar wife, who sets up for a beauty. I haven't seen her. Is she handsome?"
>
> "Yes. You can't help admitting it. But much too dark. Almost like the gipsies you see at Ascot."[37]

Lady Goneril reflects. Lord St. Moritz, she remembers, never was drawn to swarthy beauties, so there is little likelihood that she will have another rival in addition to Mrs. Stripwell, whose figure was her strong point and who "had a pretty little innocent red and white face surmounted by a touzle of hair like fluffy yellow silk."[38]

These considerations decided her ladyship. She became a partisan at once.

> "Would you like me to send her a card for to-morrow? It's one of my omnium gatherums. She would meet lots of people. And after all, it commits one to nothing."
>
> He was cunning enough to affect a hesitation which clenched the business.
>
> "I don't know," said he doubtfully. "It's very kind of you, dear Lady Goneril. Nobody is so good a friend. But--it would distress poor Mrs. Stripwell sadly. She has chosen to set her face against these people, and will take it dreadfully to heart if she meets them at any good places--like yours, for instance. I shouldn't wonder if it made her ill!"[39]

But though Whyte-Melville dramatizes such scenes with occasional success,[40] the picture is too sharply focused on a few recurring details and is without depth and breadth, blurring at the edges. Once again there seem to be elements of the picture missing. The weakness becomes clearer when one compares such scenes with those of Trollope

in whose novels the perspective widens so that around the hostess at the head of the stair case embattled armies struggle, the hostess herself now a general officer, now a champion meeting a peer in individual combat.

## Section (3) Rotten Row

More successful are the scenes in the Ride, for here is action immediately at hand, the kind of action which the novelist finds excitement in, and which he can turn to his purpose. Hardly a novel is without at least one important scene in Rotten Row[41] ("which unsavory name antiquarians affirm to be derived from Route de Roi"),[42] which surpasses anything Europa shows, Whyte-Melville thinks, for Englishmen show to the greatest advantage out of doors, and no woman alive looks so well in a riding-habit as the Anglo-Saxon. "The Prater at Vienna is a deserted solitude in comparison; and the concourse in the Bois de Boulogne reminds me of a pantomine, without the music, that gives life to that fanciful representation."[43] The Ride can be a scene of daring horsemanship:

> Perhaps the Ride in Hyde Park is the place of all others where this quality /a fine "bridle-hand"/ is most appreciated, and, shall we add? most rarely to be found. A perfect Park hack, that can walk or canter five miles an hour, no light criterion of action and balance, should also be so well broke, and so well ridden, as to change its leg, if asked to do so, at every stride. "With woven paces," if not "with waving arms," I have seen rider and horse threading in and out the trees that bisect Rotten

> Row, without missing one, for half a mile on end; the animal leading with near or off leg, as it inclined to left or right, guided only by the inflection of the rider's body, and the touch, too light to be called a pressure, of his knee and leg.[44]

The Row is also the scene of human pathos and human comedy as they occur in fashionable London, which gathers either to sit and watch,[45] the ladies making a gantlet for the self-conscious, an audience for confident dandies,[46] or to stroll, or to canter. On pleasant days, the Ride is a "ladies' mile,"

> It is the first real fine day they have had, and their light summer dresses look fresh, and pure, and delicate as the blossoms in a cherry orchard. Parasols are up, of course, and there is, indeed, glare enough to warrant a general display of this defensive apparatus, which I have, nevertheless, often observed unfurled under the darkest skies. The tender green leaves gleam and quiver over a thousand dainty heads in their tremendous little bonnets. Slender feet, encased in kid and bronze, rest lightly on the dry white gravel. Eyes are glancing, hands waving, tongues going, gossip reigns supreme, while the men who let the chairs walk to and fro, exulting, though serene.[47]

When Lord Mexico at Lady Julia's bidding brings the disreputable Nobbler King to her side, "the strangely assorted pair stopped momentarily the whole stream of the Ride."

> Peers and peeresses diverged on either side to the complete derangement of their pace and conversation. A general of cavalry had to make his charger change its leg at half a stride's notice that he might avoid them. An amiable baronet lost both stirrups, his balance, and his hat, almost everything but his temper, from the suddenness with which he pulled up; and an extremely dashing, solitary, Bois de Boulogne looking lady, in a velvet habit, relapsed so instantaneously from a haute-ecole canter to a butter and eggs trot, as to transform, with the rapidity of magic, a round,

> shapely, flowing form of feminine beauty into a mere mass of pudding, quivering and shaking about in a bag.[48]

Not all the young women occupy penny chairs. "Beautiful girls, with slender figures, tightly knotted chignons, or loosely floating hair, galloped up and down at a pace that seemed perilous to their companions."[49] Nor are all the young dandies on horseback.

> Far down the drive, from Albert Gate to Hyde Park Corner, pony-carriages, victorias, barouches, and broughams formed one continuous line, panels and harness glittering with paint and varnish, maid and matron blooming in their bright and various colours, like a bed of flowers. Here, too, were irreproachable dandies, who either did not possess horses, or found riding incompatible with the superstition of the hour. Those who had waists, rested one neat boot on the box of the wheel, in an attitude that displayed the symmetry of a manly shape to the best advantage. While those who were not so faultless in figure, made play with smiles, and nods, and killing glances from under the brims of their white hats.[50]

And under the cover of the passing parade, continued lovemaking. "No love-making has been more successful than that which is done on horseback."[51] The young dandy's horsemanship is part of his wooing.

> Riding an animal so well-shaped, so well-bitted, and well-broken, nothing could be easier than to range up alongside of a young lady at a canter, without seeming to pursue her indiscreetly, or to rein in for her with that overdone affectation of surprise which palpably defeats its object. A turn of the wrist, a touch of the leg, and Mortimer's horse was adapting itself to the pace of Miss Dennison's, as if the same volition moved both. The young lady loved a canter only less than a gallop. That she should have pulled back to a walk when joined by this additional cavalier, looked as if she was put out.[52]

## Section (4) The Race Track

Away from the Row, Whyte-Melville's West-Enders were not at all away from horses. Tattersall's, for example, was another focal point of activity, particularly masculine activity, and most of the men in the novels appear there and meet their acquaintances there, buying horses--just as frequently selling horses, when extravagance has outstripped income, placing bets, or simply gathering the latest bits of information about the sporting world.[53] So also the fashionable world, male and female, gathered at the great races, at the "carnival of Epsom [the Derby], and the more decorous festival of Ascot,"[54] but also at Goodwood, and at Newmarket, although the latter two came near the end of the season. The shrewd Mrs. Dove of Market Harborough suggests the importance of the races as a calendar for marking the progress of the "season." She is willing to keep to her garden and let her husband get his hunting as long as he can. "My idea is, London about the time of the Derby; then Ascot for a week; and home again by the beginning of July."[55] But it is the full week at Ascot that is the splendour of the summer, and the London of fashion moves on "through all that wealth of oak and fern, and hill and dale, and gleaming glade and darkening dell, that make a midsummer fairyland of Windsor Forest on your way to the Ascot

Races."[56] The migration into Berkshire is costly: furnished houses within a drive of Ascot racecourse rise to fabulous prices and "eight-roomed cottages in Windsor Forest command rentals that, on a yearly calculation, would seem exorbitant for Windsor Castle."[57] In Black but Comely Lord St. Moritz secures for his party a "bijou residence" within a mile of the Grand Stand

> at something like the rate of twenty shillings an hour, and considers it rather a bargain! He has sent down servants, provisions, wines, scented soap, and every other luxury, to this picturesque little retreat, where fruit and flowers are already in profusion.[58]

On the first night, "dinner is over; champagne has been drunk freely; claret in moderation; and coffee is served in a little gem of a drawing-room, having French windows opening to the lawn. A lovely night, with myriads of stars, tempts the ladies out of doors, and patches of white dot the shadows cast by a fine old cypress across the sward."[59] If the ladies are limited by convention to a wager, of a pair of gloves,[60] they may yet supply themselves with gloves for the coming year, and in the intimacy of the week win higher stakes yet.

## Section (5) Theatre and Opera.

At-homes and balls, meetings at Rotten Row and at Ascot do not provide the tender intimacies that theatre stalls and opera boxes furnish.

> The popularity of our Italian opera is not entirely due to its music, the best and highest paid for in Europe. Its boxes form also a convenient territory for the prosecution of those skirmishes which would become actual warfare but for the nature of the ground on which they take place. There are fair and dazzling visions, there are soft, sad sounds--most intoxicating when softest and saddest. There is bright glare on others, semi-obscurity for ourselves. There are sympathy, juxtaposition, a common object of interest, a necessity for whispers, and a propriety in absolute silence, which is in itself the strongest possible stimulant to conversation. Above all, there is a certain sentiment of isolation, the result of being shut up together for a definite period, that renders people mutually attractive; just as no man alive can accompany a woman, however ugly, for a long sea-voyage, and not fall in love with her to a certainty.[61]

In the first novel, Digby Grand[62] there is such a scene in a theatre box, and one in the last, Black but Comely,[63] and several in between.[64] In addition to sentimental passages among the audience, the novelist provides as accompaniment scene by scene accounts of plays of melodrama and pageantry such as Claude Duval; or, the Highwayman,[65] Pope Clement; or, the Cardinal's Collapse,[66] and Gipsy John; or, the Romany's Revenge,[67] a play startlingly mirroring the heroine's own predicament. In addition there is a farce, Uncle Jack including a hilarious scene which General St. Josephs watches (the reader is relieved to learn) without amusement:

> A celebrated low comedian was running up and down before the footlights in shirt and drawers. The scene represented a bed-room at an inn. The actor rang his bell, tripped over his coal-scuttle, finally upset his water-jug.[68]

State professionals appear as secondary characters (as well as briefly met participants in Richmond Park lunches from

which the ladies are excluded). Coralie de Rivolte in Digby Grand is a ballet dancer, fiery but friendly; Mme. Bravoura in Good for Nothing is an Italian singer, a sallow, unpleasant termagant (contrasted unfavorably with the native singer, Ada Latimer, "the sweetest voice in London," whose appearances are more modest but also before more select audiences).[69] Mme. Molinara in The White Rose is an actress, but actually an English country girl who has made a success in America. Two strutting actors appear: Mr. Barrington-Belgrave (once Bruff)[70] and Mr. Delapre (once Dubbs).[71] Two young aristocrats, Lord Holyhead in Good for Nothing and Dolly Egremont in The White Rose take up theater management for amusement, but Dolly has to give up his questionable avocation when he marries Miss Jane Tregunter. The later, and generally older, principals are not attracted by the green room.

Footnotes CHAPTER X

1. See General Bounce, p. 108; Contraband, p. 11; Kate Coventry, p. 35.

2. Fortescue, work cited, p.233. Compare descriptions of the season throughout Whyte-Melville's novels.

3. Rosa, work cited, pp. 43 ff.

4. Sadleir, Trollope, p. 20. See also Oliphant's Piccadilly.

5. Kate Coventry, p. 35.

6. General Bounce, p. 127.

7. Contraband, p. 205.

8. Boston Public Library Card Catalogue, under "Maxwell, Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Braddon." "Belgravia" was an identifying word and the section itself a symbol. Bertie Cecil in Under Two Flags is properly identified when described as "the darling of Belgravia" (Chap. xii), and when Charles Kingsley, the country gentleman, wants to identify a mode of life of which he disapproves, he chooses the same term: Tom Thurnall in Charles Kingsley's Two Years Ago, for example, says (Chap. xxiv); "I can show you as thorough gentlemen and ladies, people round Whitbury, living on ten shillings a week, as you will show me in Belgravia on five thousand a year."

9. A list of the novels of which this is true is very nearly a complete list of the "society" novels. Tilbury Nogo and Market Harborough, which are not exactly society novels, are the only exceptions. The basic pattern is first established in the form which is to be followed in succeeding novels, in General Bounce.

10. Satanella, p. 18. But Whyte-Melville does not capture wholly the touch of romance to the London spring that Henry Kingsley does in Ravenshoe (Chap. xxxii): "At this time the houses in the squares begin to be brilliant with flowers; and, under the awnings of the balconies, one sees women moving about in the shadow. Now, all through the short night, one hears the ceaseless low rumbling thunder of the beautiful carriages and in the daytime also the noise ceases not. All through the west end of the town there is a smell of flowers, of freshwatered roads, and Macassar oil; while at Covent Garden, the scent

of the peaches and pineapples begins to prevail over that of rotten cabbage stalks. The fiddlers are all fiddling away at concert pitch for their lives, and actors are all acting their very hardest, and the men who look after the horses have never a minute to call their own, day or night."

11. *Contraband*, p. 34.

12. *General Bounce*, p. 127.

13. The same place.

14. The same place.

15. *Black but Comely*, p. 167. The entire passage is an interesting supplementary description: "A London season soon slips away. Town never seems really full till just before the Derby; then comes a week of clouds and rain, spent in exchanging meteorological lamentations and hopps for a change, dinners, plays, balls, receptions, and lo! Ascot is upon us before we have time to turn around. That pleasant gathering, and the Whitsuntide holidays, empty the Park of its surplus and fill a good many country houses to overflowing; but with the hot weather people return to crowded staircases and suffocating dinners, till startled by questions concerning Goodwood--premonitory symptoms of the end. Presently cabs, piled with luggage, are to be seen in greater numbers day by day. Leaves droop in the squares, water-carts omit their rounds, girls grow pale, chaperons haggard, and the carriage-horses go down in their action. Dresses are packed, bills left unpaid, thermometers stand at eighty degrees in the shade; and so comes Goodwood, and after Goodwood--the Deluge!

"In the meantime, one of the great landmarks of summer has been reached, and the 'world of fashion'--to use an expression of the morning papers--migrates into Berkshire. Furnished houses within a drive of Ascot racecourse have risen to fabulous prices; eight-roomed cottages in Windsor Forest command rentals that, on a yearly calculation, would seem exorbitant for Windsor Castle."

16. *Kate Coventry*, p. 71.

17. The same place.

Footnotes Chapter X (Continued)

18. The same place.

19. Contraband, p. 297.

20. The same place. For another description of the end of the season see Black but Comely, p. 167, quoted above, Note 15.

21. Compare for example the description of the season quoted in the text from Kate Coventry and the description from Black but Comely quoted in Note 15. The two are twenty-three years apart.

22. Compare discussion below, Chap. xv, Sec. 3 and 4, of the absence of the father-mother relationship in the novels.

23. Whyte-Melville remarks that the characteristic fashionable crowd includes the young and the old, seldom the middle-aged. At one gathering (Contraband, p. 299) there is an excess of ladies and very young and very old men but "scarcely a man to be seen between thirty and fifty."

24. Especially in Contraband and in Satanella. For a detailed description of a dinner at the apartment of Mrs. Lascelles, a widow, and Miss Ross, see Contraband, pp. 49 ff.

25. That impression is what one might expect a bachelor without family of his own to record. It is quite possible that much of Whyte-Melville's life in the West End was a kind of bachelor life. See biographical sketch.

26. The opening chapters of Uncle John, for example. Some references to St. James Street and the clubs: Tilbury Nogo, p. 81; General Bounce, pp. 206 ff. Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 110; Contraband, pp. 154 and 293 ff., Roy's Wife, p. 140; and Black but Comely, p. 155. Also, Crockford's, The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 110; Pratt's, Contraband, p. 295, and White's, Black but Comely, p. 160.

27. General Bounce, Chap. xii (the girls visit the barracks); The Brookes of Bridlemere, Chap. ii; The White Rose, Chap. xviii; M. or N., Chap. xiv; Contraband, Chap. vii; Satanella, Chap. vii; Uncle John, Chap. xiv.

Footnotes Chapter X (Continued)

28. Which takes place after lunch! (See Contraband, p. 205.) M. or N., Chap. vii, describes a "breakfast" with dancing.

29. Good for Nothing, Chap. iv, describes a morning musical.

30. Some at-homes in Whyte-Melville: Good for Nothing, Chap. xv; General Bounce, Chap. xvii; Tilbury Nogo, Chap. xxvi (in Bath); Roy's Wife, Chap. xxi; M. or N., Chap. xv; Satanella, Chapl xxvi; Black but Comely, Chap. xxvii. Dancing was often arranged at "at-homes" and there seems to have been very little difference, except, perhaps, in formality, between an elaborate at-home and a ball. For some balls, see Uncle John, Chap. xviii and Kate Coventry, p. 25; also provincial balls in Tilbury Nogo, Chap. vii (a ball during Ascot week); General Bounce, Chap. viii (the Guyville ball); Market Harborough, Chap. xxiv (for a description of the ball at Market Harborough see also E. Pennell Elmhirst's The Cream of Leicestershire, 1883, p. 48); The Brookes of Bridlemere, Chap. x (the Middlesworth ball). In the historical novels, Whyte-Melville liked to build incident around mistaken identities at masked balls: The Interpreter, Cerise, Sister Louise, and Rosine.

31. Good for Nothing, pp. 121-122.

32. The White Rose, p. 3.

33. Good for Nothing, p. 103.

34. Contraband, p. 178.

35. Satanella, p. 304.

36. Chap. xiii, "Diplomacy," in which Gordon uses the same method to get an invitation for Bella Jones from Lady Olivia.

37. Black but Comely, pp. 160-161.

38. The same, p. 161.

39. The same, p. 161.

40. Another set of scenes in which Whyte-Melville shows some talent for the amusing is the sequence of scenes

of rumor and gossip: Kate Coventry, pp. 53-54; Sister Louise, p. 182; Uncle John, p. 391; Good for Nothing, pp. 156-157 and 347; Satanella, p. 16; Black but Comely, p. 153; Roy's Wife, p. 345. Compare Henry Kingsley, Hillyars and the Burtons, Chap. xlv; also Pendennis, Chap. xxi.

41. Examples: The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 388; The White Rose, pp. 234 ff. and 253 ff.; Riding Recollections, pp. 84 ff.; Uncle John, pp. 244 ff.; M. or N., pp. 114 ff.; Satanella, p. 18; Kate Coventry, pp. 4, 18, and 67; Bones and I, p. 275.

42. Good for Nothing, p. 117.

43. The same place.

44. Riding Recollections, pp. 84 ff. Compare the following passage from Bones and I, p. 276: Get into the saddle, leap on a thorough-bred horse, if you have got one. Never mind his spoiling you for every other animal of meaner race, and come for a "spin" up the Ride from Hyde Park Corner to Kensington Gate, careful only to steady him sufficiently for the safety of Her Majesty's subject, and the inquisition, not very rigorous, of the policeman on duty. For seven months in the year at least this is perhaps the only mile and a half in England over which you may gallop without remorse for battering legs and feet to pieces on the hard ground. Away you go, the breeze lifting your whiskers from the very roots . . . . Never mind, the faster you gallop the keener and cooler comes the air. Sit well down, just feel him on the curb, let him shake his pretty head and play with his bridle, sailing away with his hindlegs under your stirrup-irons, free yet collected, so that you could let him out at speed, or have him back in a canter within half a dozen strides; pat him lovingly just where the hair turns on his glossy neck like a knot in polished woodwork, and while he bends to meet the caress, and bounds to acknowledge it, tell me that dancing is the poetry of motion if you dare!

45. The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 381. The Duchess of Merthyr-Tydvil and Lady Julia have a great liking for the penny chairs at noon.

46. Henry Kingsley and John Galsworthy both give amusing pictures of the young dandies in the Ride.

> When we were over in England for the exhibition of 1862, we hired a carriage and went for a drive in the park; and there, if we saw one Charles Morton, we saw five hundred. Charles Mortons were standing against the

> rails in long rows, like penguins--each one most wonderfully like the other; all cast nearly in the same mold by nature, and if not, every trifling peculiarity of outward look polished away by inexorable custom; all dressed alike, with their beards and moustaches so exactly in the same pattern that it became ludicrous. (Hillyars and the Burtons, Chap. xlix.)
>
> Three men walking along the rails were snatching off their hats before a horsewoman at exactly the same angle and with precisely the same air, as though in the modish performance of this ancient rite they were satisfying some instinct dear to them. (The Island Pharisees, Chap. xii)

In Galsworthy's novels the Ride is a central scene and the changes which take place in the ride become symbols of the passing of time.

47. The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 381.

48. The same, p. 388.

49. Uncle John, p. 245.

50. The same, p. 246.

51. Uncle John, p. 245.

52. The same, p. 251.

53. For example, Market Harborough, p. 5; General Bounce, pp. 167-168; The White Rose, p. 358, M. or N., p. 139; Satanella, p. 267; Contraband, p. 229; and Black but Comely, p. 198.

54. Smart, Breezie Langton, Bk. I, Chap. i. For Ascot gatherings in Whyte-Melville, see particularly Kate Coventry, Chap. i; The White Rose, Chap. xxxiv; Contraband, Chap. vi; and Black but Comely, Chaps. xxviii-xxxii.

55. Market Harborough, p. 166.

56. Contraband, p. 61.

57. Black but Comely, p. 167.

58. The same place.

59. The same work, p. 168.

60. See Tilbury Nogo, p. 100, for example: or Contraband, p. 71. References to the same wager appear in H. H. Smart, Henry Kingsley, and George Lawrence.

61. Contraband, p. 197. See also Satanella, pp. 49-50 for a similar comment: "Among the many strange functions of society, few seem more unaccountable than its tendency to select a theatre as the rendezvous of sincere affection."

62. Digby Grand, Chap. v.

63. Chap.s xxxviii-xxxix.

64. See particularly Good for Nothing, Chap. xix; The White Rose, Chap. lviii; M. or N., Chap. xiii; Contraband, pp. 192 and 201; Satanella, Chap. vi.

65. M. or N., Chap. xiii.

66. The White Rose, Chaps. lviii-lix.

67. Black but Comely, Chaps. xxxix-xli.

68. Satanella, p. 53.

69. The shift in characterization from De Rivolte to Bravoura, and then the disappearance from the later novels of such characters may indicate a change in popular fashions in opera and singers.

70. The White Rose.

71. Black but Comely.

# CHAPTER XI

## The West End: Ruler and Subject

### Section (1) The Hierarchy

In the hierarchy of fashionable London life, the women are the rulers,[1] dictating who shall and who shall not be admitted within the circle of respectability.[2] The hierarchy is elaborate and fixed. Lady Mt. Helicon in *General Bounce*, for example, "belongs to the mass of good society, and receives cards for all the 'best places' and most magnificent entertainments," but even she "is as far removed as a curate's wife from those bright particular stars with whom she would give her coronet to associate." Lady Longacre, for example, bows to Lady Mt. Helicon but does not *nod* to her, and Lady Dinadam invites Lady Mt. Helicon to the great ball which she gives annually, but not to the little dinners. In Lady Mt. Helicon's immediate circle are the Ormolus and the Veneers, below her are the Duffles and the Marchpanes and a whole host of inferiors.[3]

In his picture of this hierarchy as in his picture of scenes from London life there are sharply focused centers with blurred edges. The blurred edges are the middle class and the great aristocracy. Although Whyte-Melville scatters a few Lords and a few Duchesses throughout the novels they are seen generally at a distance and only

briefly, as somewhat detached observers living in another world.[4] The women especially are at the edge of the picture, whereas philandering Lords come more frequently to the center of the stage (Lord St. Heliers of *Digby Grand* and Lord St. Moritz of *Black but Comely,* for example.) Occasionally a young aristocrat appears at a ball or an at-home or a house-party, as often as not to become the object of mild satire (the ineffectual Sir Ascot Uppercrust of *General Bounce* and the dull Lord St. Abbs of *Satanella*, who is nevertheless a scholar and a man of public importance).[5] It is in a less exalted sphere that Whyte-Melville's characters move, sufficiently earthy to admit second sons of small gentry and sufficiently exclusive to bar those who are not quite gentlemen (or ladies who are "slang" or "bad style"). The leisured upper middle classes and the minor aristocracy merge one into the other. When Burke's *Peerage* and *Landed Gentry* and the *Court Guide* provide no information, the point at which gentility can draw the line is a matter of instinctive feeling and also of arbitrary judgment by the dowager arbiters. Although wealth may be occasionally important for the climber, tact and shrewdness is equally important, and Whyte-Melville's climbers depend more usually upon their wits.

## Section (2) Aging Matrons and Young Widows

Two types usually paired throughout the novels are the aging matron fighting to retain her grip on that segment of society at least which she dominates, and the young widow (or young matron whose husband leaves her sufficient freedom for equally unrestricted flirting) who threatens at the least to disrupt the hierarchical proprieties and at the worst to seize the throne. The novelist schieves greater variety with the latter and shows her greater sympathy; with the former he is less successful, seldom going beyond thin sketches: Lady Scapegrace in Kate Coventry, Lady Mt. Helicon in General Bounce, Lady Visigoth in Good for Nothing, Lady Scavenger in Satanella, Lady Pandora in Roy's Wife, and Lady Goneril in Black but Comely. The names indicate both the satirical intent and the over-simplification of the picture.[6]

More interesting in the pattern of society are the young widows and flirting matrons: Mrs. Man-trap in Digby Grand, Mrs. Montague Forbes in Tilbury Nogo, Mrs. Lumley in Kate Coventry, the Countess Rose in The Interpreter, Mrs. Montpelier in Good for Nothing, Mrs. Lascelles in Contraband, Mrs. Lushington in Satanella, Lady Jane in Roy's Wife, and Mrs. Stripwell in Black but Comely. (Mme. de Montespan in Sister Louise is a thinly-disguised cousin of these.) In the fashionable novel, "the state of wealthy

widowhood" is the summit of earthly bliss."[7] Of all these, Mrs. Lascelles comes the nearest to the happy state: she is beautiful, wealthy, established in society, and sufficiently worldly to make the most of her position, though amiable and in the end victim of a sentimental and not a profitable attachment. Not all are amiable, however, and not all are completely liberated (Mrs. Lumley, Mrs. Lushington, and Mrs. Stripwell all have husbands, conveniently retiring and indifferent to the goings and comings of their wives). But Mrs. Lumley, Mrs. Montpellier, Mrs. Lascelles take a maternal interest in guiding younger members of fashionable society in the paths of the world, somewhat genial, frequently disillusioned, tart-tongued and satirical.[8] Mrs. Lumley of Kate Coventry, "a most amusing and satirical personage," Kate writes, "with a variety of anecdotes about all her friends and acquaintance, and a sort of flippant manner that was quite irresistible,"[9] is representative. Mrs. Lumley is fast enough[10] and "bad style" enough to incur Cousin John's disapproval, but Kate defends her friend. Mr. Lumley is not strong physically and his attention is engrossed by entomology.

> He never inquired where she went, or what she did, but late or early always received her with the same quiet welcome, the same sly good-humoured smile. I firmly believe that with all her levity, whatever scandal might say, she was a good wife to him. He trusted her implicitly; and I think she felt his confidence deserved to be respected. Such was not the opinion of the world, I am well aware; but we all know the charitable construction it is so eager to put on a fair face with a loud laugh and a good set of teeth.[11]

Mrs. Montpelier of Good for Nothing is one of the first women of questioned background to be sketched sympathetically. (Later Whyte-Melville was to combine the Mary Delavals and Ada Latimers with the Mrs. Montpelliers.)

> "Who is she? demanded Lady Visigoth, with annually increasing virulence, spreading her long hands and tossing her head like one of her own carriage-horses; indeed, her face strongly resembled that of the Roman-nosed one that went on the near side. "There are stories about her, I tell you. What are her antecedents? answer me that!" 12

The asperity of Lady Visigoth's queries is not lessened by the fact that Mrs. Montpellier, twice-widowed and returned to London after experiences in India and on the Continent, had "made her house the pleasantest lounge in London, and, consequently, commanded a great deal of very agreeable society, of which that exclusive dame could not have the faintest notion."13 Mrs. Montpellier's little suppers on Saturday night and her choice picnics are popular, and between two and five the visitor at her pretty house might select a companion from the pleasantest people in London. "No wonder the young men dropped in so naturally at Mrs. Montpellier's, and stayed there, as Lady Visigoth viciously remarks, so long!"14 Past thirty, Mrs. Montpellier is still bright and handsome. Dark, with black hair, she possesses features which "though irregular, had extraordinary play and brilliancy." "Her figure, which had always been her strong point (and a very strong point such a figure is), preserved its symmetrical outline, and

remained lithe and undulating."[15] Mrs. Montpellier triumphs over Lady Visigoth in the end though the course and details of her victory are not recorded.

But not all the widows are basically amiable behind their outward manner of satirical worldliness. Some are malicious, motivated by proprietary instincts and an inclination to any man so long as another woman wants him, clever and merciless when the contest becomes a "war to the knife."[16] Like Mrs. Lumley of Kate Coventry, a young matron whose husband allows her to go her own way, Mrs. Lushington "was never so happy as when she had succeeded in detaching a gentleman from the lady of his affections, if, in so doing, she inflicted on the latter the sorrow of a wounded spirit and the pain of a vexed heart."[17] Mrs. Lushington and her sisters end usually in futility and a gradual decline in power:

> Then a grey hair or two had lately shown themselves in her abundant brown locks; while of the people she chose to flirt with, some neglected her society for a cruise, others afforded her more of the excitement produced by rivalry than she relished, none paid her the devoted attention she had learned to consider her due.[18]

Whyte-Melville's predatory widows are conventional figures of the fashionable novel. Worldly ambition, usually, accounts for their actions. But at one point he allows his fancy to play with the comparison of such a woman to a vampire so as to suggest that he was aware at

least of compulsive forces which mere social rivalry does not account for. In Bones and I, the narrator describes superstitions he had come upon in Belgrade about the vampire. Bones gravely confirms the existence of such people, and describes a young widow whom he met at intervals during his life and who remained perpetually young and unmarked by age as Bones himself grew old and neared the grave. Her beauty was wild and unearthly, her face "the most perfect face I ever saw. Straight nose, thin and delicately cut, large black eyes, regular eyebrows, faultless chin, terminating a complete oval, the whole set in a frame of jet-black hair."[19] When seen nearer "the eyes were deep, and dark, yet with the glitter in them of a hawk's, the cheek deadly pale, the lips bright red." Her voice when he hears her whisper in a theatre box makes his flesh creep.

> Low as they were modulated, there was in every syllable a tone of such utter hopelessness, such abiding sorrow, regret, even remorse, always present, always kept down, that I could have imagined her one of those lost spirits for whom is fixed the punishment of all most cruel, most intolerable, that they can never forget they are formed for better things. Her gestures, too, were in accordance with the sad, suggestive music of her voice--quiet, graceful, and somewhat listless in the repose, as it seemed, rather of unhappiness than of indolence. [20]

Her story as Bones narrates it is one of continued fatality, men disgraced, men killed in duels, men dead by their own hand, men self-exiled in distant army posts, old colonels

and young boys. Old and in a Bath chair, Bones stops her in the gardens at Hampton Court to ask her to spare the young boy with whom he has just seen her.

> She was fitting the glove on her faultless little hand. Her brow seemed so calm, so soft and pure, that for a moment I thought I had conquered, but looking up from her feminine employment, I recognized the hungry glitter in those dark, merciless eyes, and I knew there was no hope.
>
> "It is too late," she answered, "too late to persuade either him or me. It is no fault of mine. It is fate. For him--for the others--for all of us. Sometimes I wish it had not been so. Mine has been an unhappy life, and there seems to be no end, no resting place. I can no more help myself than a drowning wretch, swept down by a torrent; but I am too proud to catch at twigs and straws that would break off in my hand. I would change places with you willingly. Yes--you in that Bath chair. I am so tired sometimes, and yet I dare not wish it was all over.[21]

Elements of this sketch are repeated in the later novels, particularly in Satanella, but the conception of dread fatality behind the affairs between men and women, of love as a cruel compulsion is not embodied in the society novels. In the strong, passionate, capable women of the historical novels--Mary Cave of Holmby House, Valeria of The Gladiators, Mme. de Montmorail of Cerise, and Semiramis of Sarchedon the novelist comes nearer both to fatality and to passion,[22] but the final effect in these novels is one of unreality.[23]

## Section (3) The Young Horsewoman: Kate Coventry

More original than his widows and fast young matrons are Whyte-Melville's spirited young horsewomen,

and Kate Coventry, one of the earliest of these in the novels, remains the most popular among readers of Whyte-Melville.[24] Although Kate is suspiciously self-conscious and coy in her wide-eyes naivety and in her innocent exposure of her own caprices, the novelist's touch is relatively deft, and the passages recording her refusal to perceive Cousin John's more-than-cousinly (but thoroughly honorable) interest in her and her gradual awakening to his attractions, provides some amusement. (On the whole, each chapter in succession points up to a conclusion with more skill than do the more elaborate society novels, a merit which the later Satanella shares.)

In the very first chapter Kate speculates both on Cousin John and the kind of man she admires:

> I often wonder whether other people think cousin John good-looking. I have known him so long, that I believe I can hardly be a fair judge. He is fresh-coloured, to be sure, and square, and rather fat, and when he smiles, and shows all his white teeth, he has a very pleasant appearance; but I think I admire a man who looks rather more of a roue--not like Colonel Bingham exactly, whose face is all wrinkles and whiskers, but a little care-worn and jaded, as if he was accustomed to difficulties, and had other things to occupy his thoughts besides his horses and his dinner.[25]

(None of the later heroines are quite so girlish as this.) Her interest in Cousin John is diverted by the appearance of Capt. Lovell, as yet unidentified.

> Of all delights in the world give me my morning canter up the Park on Brilliant. . . . I pat Brilliant's smooth hard neck, and he shakes his head, and strikes an imaginary butterfly with one

> black foreleg, and I draw my rein a thought tighter, and away we go, much to the admiration of that good-looking man with moustachios who is leaning on his umbrella close to the rails, and smoking the cigar of meditation, as if the Park was his own.[26]

She notices him day after day, and notices, too, his absence on Derby Day, and fancies ("though of course it could only be fancy," she coyly interjects in her journal) that he looks as though he were expecting her.

> At last I couldn't help blushing, and I thought he saw it; for I'm sure he smiled, and then I was so provoked with myself, that I sent Brilliant up the Ride at a pace nothing short of a race-horse could have caught.[27]

In the meantime, however, she reveals her partiality for her cousin--or at least her feminine vanity--by showing pique when John whom she treats so casually does not dance attendance upon her in the Row.

> To start off by himself, and escort Miss Molasses, as if he was her brother *at least*, if not a nearer relation, Miss Molasses, forsooth! with her lackadaisical ways, and her sentimental nonsense. . . well, at all events, she don't ride like me. Such a figure I never saw on a horse! all on one side, like the handle of a teapot, bumping when she trots, and wobbling when she canters, with braiding all over her habit, and a *white* feather in her hat, and gauntlet gloves. . . and her sallow face. People call her interesting, but *I* call her *bilious*; and a wretched long-legged Rosinante, with *round* reins and tassels, and a netting cover over its ears, and a head like a fiddle-case, and no more action than a camp-stool.[28]

On the way back from Hampton Races, Kate and Frank ride together, John lagging behind. After wishing Captain Lovell a good night Kate and her Cousin ride thoughtfully home through the quiet streets. She notices

that his manner is altered. "His farewell sounded more constrained, more polite than usual, when he left me at Aunt Deborah's door." While she undresses, Kate reflects on the proceedings of the day and tries to puzzle out the reason for John's displeasure.

> The more I went over it backwards and forwards, the less could I make of it.
>
> "Can it be possible," I thought at last--"can it be possible that cousin John"--and here I popped out my candle and jumped into bed. [29]

Even after this self-conscious surmise, Kate is not fully enlightened. When Kate tells John that Squire Haycock has proposed to her he flushes, turns pale, and can get out only, "Well, Kate?"

> "And I have refused him, John," I said quietly, but in a tone that showed him there was no mistake about it.
>
> "God bless you, Kate!" was all he replied, and turned away muttering something about wet things and his dressing room; but he was going to the wrong door, and had to turn back, though he took care not to let me see his face again.
>
> I can't make John out. At dinner he was just as if nothing had happened; but at all events I'm glad I've refused Mr. Haycock; so I shall read Frank's notes over once more, and then go to bed.[30]

Cousin John proposes, Kate disposes, but they remain friends. Now she has refused him, Kate begins to take more interest in him. She watches him walk away from the house.

> How stately was his walk as he strode down the street! . . .John was grown much handsomer of late; he used to be too ruddy and prosperous-looking and

> boyish, but his countenance had altered considerably the last two or three months.[31]

Kate now remembers that Lady Scapegrace had spoken of John as good-looking and begins even to think that John has a nobler bearing than Captain Lovell himself, though not so graceful. John himself, now that his fate has been decided and that he and Kate must remain friends and cousins merely, is capable of holding his own with Kate. Riding with the Queen's Hounds, Kate takes a spill. Afterward,

> I do not know what prompted the question, but I could not forbear asking him in a sort of half-laughing way, "John, if I had broken my neck to-day, what on earth should you have done?"

"Mourned for you as a sister, Kate," he replied gravely, even severely.

I did not speak another word the whole way home.[32]

When Sir Guy meets Frank, John, and Kate at the station and when Kate on the way home drives the four-in-hand herself, recklessly, much to Sir Guy's delight and Frank's disapproval, and smokes a cigar, it is John whom she intends to provoke. That night, too, she expects John to be very angry with her. Before dinner the two sit reading in silence. "It was getting painful," Kate records.

"John," said I, "what time do we dine?"

> "A quarter before eight, I believe," answered John, quite good-humouredly, and as if nothing had happened to estrange us. "Dear me, Kate, how early you're dressed!"

> I could have cried with vexation; but I resolved if possible, to find a sore place somewhere, and give him "one" before I had done with him; so I made a saucy face, and asked him, half laughing, whether "he didn't think I had driven them very well from the station?"
>
> "Inimitably, Kate," was his reply; "I hadn't the least idea you were so accomplished a charioteer."
>
> "I should have burst into tears, I verily believe, but just then Lady Scapegrace sailed in.[33]

In the end John wins a more than well-earned victory.

Among the best scenes in the novel are those with the hounds. Riding with the Queen's, Kate and Mrs. Lumley agree not to jump, but when the hounds turn toward the two horsewomen and take up the scent in the adjoining pasture, not a soul really with them, the two women can hold back no longer. Kate jumps Brilliant over a fence.

> I thought Brilliant never would come to the ground; and when he did touch it, he was so excited with his previous restraint and his present position, that he broke clear away with me. I was a little frightened, but I never lost my nerve. I flew past Mrs. Lumley like an arrow.[34]

Kate'settles down and for several fences, until the hounds check, she and Mrs. Lumley have the lead of the field. Kate's excitement brings disastrous consequences, however. "What an example we have made of the gentlemen! Kate," Mrs. Lumley says, and then adds, arousing Kate's ire, "I had no idea you could ride like this." Kate, in her journal, writes: "I thought, "Wait a little and I'll show you.' I felt I hated her, though she was my friend." So when Mrs. Lumley cautions Kate against taking the next fence and

and points to a gate as a way out, Kate clenches her teeth and rides straight for the fence.

> It looked dark and forbidding. I did not see how it was to be done, but I trusted to Brilliant and Brilliant nearly did it--but not quite. There was a loud crash; one of my pommels gave me an awkward dig in the side. I saw the white star on my horse's forehead shoot below me; and the muddy, gravelly lane seemed to rise in my face and rasp my hands and smear my habit, and get conglomerated with my hair. The horsemen were all around me when I got up. [35]

Kate is not injured, but her pride is hurt. "To have had a fall amongst all those men!" Mrs. Lumley, furthermore, has the last word:

> Mrs. Lumley only stood aloof and sneered. "I told you not to ride there, Kate," said she; "and what a fall you've had--amongst all these people, too!" She very nearly made me an enemy for life. [36]

## Section (4) Kate's Predecessors

Kate Coventry was foreshadowed slightly in Digby Grand in Julia Batt, daughter of the Rev. Amos Batt, a clergyman who was fond of shooting but not of hunting and would not "hear of such a performance" when Julia wanted to ride with the Hark Halloa hounds at Halverly Hall instead of watching them genteelly at a distance with the other ladies in their carriages. Digby Grand himself expresses a distaste for horsewomen. After hunting all week with Nelly Spinnithorne, the Squire's daughter, having considered marrying her for her fortune, Digby writes,

> I cannot help drawing comparisons between her and Flora; the latter so gentle, so beautiful, so bewitching, with her large melancholy eyes and thoughtful brows--the former so boisterous, so prosperous-looking, so noisy. I believe I shall always hate fine teeth, fresh complexions, and sunny ringlets. Besides, nothing frightens her. She was riding a violent five-year-old horse, and sat him as if he was a shooting pony.[37]

But two years later manners in Whyte-Melville's novels change, the dandies approve of daring horsemanship--presumably if the horsewoman remains feminine enough, and the sportswomen are consistently attractive and graceful.[38] The loud, vulgar, horsy woman appears once more, by indirect allusion, in Inside the Bar. Cyrus Softly before meeting Miss Merlin visualizes her as

> a lady of gaudy exterior, such as I remember to have met formerly out hunting in the vicinity of London, and masculine, not to say free-and-easy manners, with a bold eye, a dab of rouge, false plaits skilfully disposed, and a loud voice, enforcing a corresponding style of language, garnished with strong expressions.[39]

Softly imagines her bidding him, the sole inmate at the inn, to join her at dinner. "Perhaps, ere twelve hours had elapsed, we might be drinking the palest brandy and water together, while I smoked my virgin weed, and she indulged in a coquettish little cigarette."[40]

Blanche, in General Bounce, is very nearly a fully developed Kate Coventry, and her Water King is nearly as familiar on the Ride as Kate's Brilliant and White Stockings. "Humble pedestrians stopped to gaze open-mouthed on that shapely form [Water King's, that is]."

During the gay London season, Blanche like Kate is led by naturally high spirits and by circumstances into flirtations which do not sully her basic innocence and honesty. Like Kate, too, Blanche follows the hounds, and in the run described in "Flood and Field" keeps up with the forward ones, following Frank Hardingstone (who though not a dandy is a sportsman), "her violet eyes dancing with excitement, and her long fair curls floating over her riding habit." Like Kate too she comes to disaster when Water King takes the bit in his mouth and follows the leader into the river. (Frank, already in, saves her.)

### Section (5) Kate's Successors.

Throughout the novels high-spirited girls canter in the Ride and follow the hounds, but few Kate Coventires become central figures.[41] Ciss Dove the Parson's daughter in Market Harborough follows the hounds with her father regularly, and hunts Mr. Sawyer with undistracted single mind. Miss Merlin in Inside the Bar is a "regular flyer" but as a kind of feminine Byronic figure anticipates the women of the later novels, particularly Satanella. Three almost identical heroines, all daughters of squires, who have grown up in country houses, ride and skate, and share in common a proud spirit, play rather conventional and subdued roles: Helen Brooke in The Brookes of Bridlemere,

Helen Hallaton in Contraband, and Annie Dennison in Uncle John. Helen Hallaton, for example,

> was rather tall, too, and handsomely formed, with shapely hands and feet; but the graceful figure suggested a fair amount of strength and energy, nor were you surprised to learn that she could ride, walk, garden, and milk a cow. There were few better waltzers anywhere, and no such skater in the shire. Moreover, though she never confessed to it, I believe she used to play cricket with her brother, and was an undeniable long-stop.[42]

All these are overshadowed by other and more exciting women.

Jane Tregunter in The White Rose and Lady Julia in The Brookes of Bridlemere come nearer being true successors of Kate Coventry. Miss Tregunter plays a subordinate role, but most of that on horseback, rejecting one admirer cantering on the Ride, reconciling another after a chance meeting during a hunt. Lady Julia is Kate's most brilliant successor, but a much more stylish horsewoman, much more certain of herself, saucy and witty, without Kate's maidenly coyness. She is usually displayed in action, dancing or riding.

> Before he could answer. . . .she was away on her flight /around the ballroom/ once more, her pliant figure swaying gracefully to every movement of her cavalier, her draperies floating about her in a mist of lace and muslin, and a gossamer material which, I understand, is called, with great propriety, illusion, her eyes shooting sparks like diamonds, and the uncompromising mouth shut tighter than before.[43]

Or, during the hunt when Lady Julia takes her father's advice not to jump her horse

> swinging along by his side at an easy gallop, her delicate profile looking very pretty under her neat

> riding-hat; the auburn hair skilfully flattened down in front, and gathered up behind, just leaving the little tip of an ear, with a jewel in it visible; the taper hands, in delicate yellow gloves, holding their reins with a light, firm touch far back in her lap, so as to give Cockamaroo's head all the liberty compatible with a gentle and persuasive control, while the sweet, round figure in its tightly-fitted habit swayed and gave gracefully to every stride of the well-bred, powerful horse.[44]

Julia mingles the attraction of aristocratic delicacy and English determination, dignity and vivaciousness. For out-of-door work and country wear she dresses herself "in a very dark-coloured velvet . . . which, fitting quite close to her bust and shoulders, fell in long ample folds below the waist, giving her beautifully molded form an appearance of greater height than it possessed."[45] And she is fully aware of her appearance: "under a little white lace collar she wore a broad light green ribbon--the only bit of color in her whole dress-very becoming, as doubtless she well knew, to the delicate bloom of her complexion, and the glory of her rich chestnut hair."[46] When Walter tries to propose

> the diamond eyes gleamed and sparkled, bright as the jewels in her perfect little ears; and the clear fair face, with its well-cut features, broke into sunny smiles with every changing topic that arose, but there was a strange resolute expression about the rose lips, that deepened and deepened as Walter's tone grew more and more serious and affectionate. With all her beauty--youthful, saucy, and attractive though it was--she looked a lady who could depend on herself in any emergency either of body or mind. [47]

In General Bounce when Sir Ascot Uppercrust proposes to Blanche Kettering, Blanche "hesitated--felt very angry--

half inclined to laugh and half inclined to cry." When Sir Ascot takes her embarrassed silence for consent, "poor little Blanche" finally manages to stammer out "I didn't mean--that is--I meant, or rather I intended--to--to--to decline--or, I should say--in short, _I couldn't for the world!_" At this she blushes once more "up to her eyes" and escapes on the arm of Major D'Orville who conveniently passes.[48] But Julia ten years later needs no rescuer when Walter approaches her in the conservatory. As she reaches up to snip shoots from a pendent plant,

> her waist looked particularly taper and inviting in this attitude. His arm was round it in an instant, and the scissors fell on the varnished pavement with a clang.
>
> She disengaged herself in a rapid, snake-like twirl, not agitated nor frightened, nor even astonished, only--as he could not but perceive to his great discomfiture--somewhat amused.
>
> "This is a bad floor for waltzing, Mr. Brooke," said she composedly; "and the place altogether too hot for a dance. Let us walk back into the drawing-room!" 49

The skirmish continues but Lady Julia does not blush, finally half-jokes, half-talks Walter out of his mood of courtship, telling him not to be an ass and "coming closer to him, and taking both his hands, while she looked up in his face with a frank, kindly smile."[50] "Don't be angry," she finishes; "we've had our breeze; shake hands and think no more about it."[51] In _The White Rose_ published four years later, Whyte-Melville speaks of Mrs. Braddon's

auburn-haired heroines, and their refreshing contempt for the conventions.[52] It is evident that in The Brookes of Bridlemere he has already been to school with Mrs. Braddon.[53]

### Section (6) Kate Coventry Modernized

As the heroines increase in sauciness and independence, they are also horsewomen who are more daring and more capable than the still feminine Kate Coventry, and scorn a "lady's horse."[54] Blanche Douglas, though of a different genealogy from that of Kate Coventry and her successors, exhibits this daring more clearly. When the horse Satanella is being led to her door, the horse takes more of the thoroughfare than is convenient by "advancing lengthways, with many plunges and lashings out, and whiskings of her long square tail."[55] Miss Douglas, however, is fully capable of handling the "brute" (as General St. Josephs, her companion, calls the horse). Blanche laughs "rather scornfully" at the General's old-fashioned remonstrances:

> The black mare lashed out . . .with a violence that brought his heart into the soldier's mouth, executing thereafter some half-dozen long and dangerous plunges. Miss Douglas sat perfectly still, giving the animal plenty of rein; then administered one severe cut with a stiff riding-whip that left its mark on the smooth shining skin; and, having thus asserted herself, made much of her favourite, as if she love it all the better for its wilfulness.[56]

But Blanche Douglas and the other heroines of the later novels are in descent from the Miss Merlins (Inside the Bar) and Mrs. Montpelliers (Good for Nothing), with some relationship to the Mary Delavals (General Bounce) and Ada Latimers (Good for Nothing), rather than from Kate Coventry. The novelist's attempt to modernize Kate's successors is less successful. The nearest to an expression of feminist sentiments in the novels is the rebellion of Annie Dennison in Uncle John. But her discontent is chiefly a reaction from the round of fashionable life, and her solution is conventional--work among the poor. "I feel so frivolous, so useless, so unnecessary," she exclaims to her older friend. "It seems as if I had no established place in the world."[57] She goes on to complain of her sex. "Every man has his place in the world and knows it!"[58] The example of Florence Nightingale fires her, and she plans to work among the poor. Mrs. Pike raises the feminine question of becoming costume for such work.

> "I am not the least afraid of undertaking it," continued Annie, passing over the question of costume. "I was reading about it in a book the other day. The man says one's whole mind should be engrossed by the profession, and one should care very little for anything else. That's exactly my case. I care so very little for anything else!"[59]

Her real motive is quite apparent and her feminism a fraud: Horace Maxwell is in Vienna and they had parted cooly. "The

meaning of all this was a good deal of affection, and some pique, acting on a high spirit, a generous and unselfish heart."[60]

Some slight influence of the accomplishments of the "modern woman" are hinted at, as an awkward afterthought, in the novelist's description of Hester Bruce (in Roy's Wife) although Hester is actually not far removed from the conventional Helen Brookes, Helen Hallatons, and Annie Dennisons. She is even more athletic than they:

> Lithe, straight, and agile, she was a proficient in all those bodily exercises at which ladies are now able to compete on equal terms with the stronger sex. A practiced whip, she drove her ponies to an inch; a capital horsewoman, she rode to hounds (with a good pilot)[61] in the first flight. She danced like a fairy; could run a quarter of a mile or walk half a dozen without the slightest inconvenience; and even professed, though of this she afforded no actual proof, that she was able to jump a gate or a stile.[62] At any rate, for all her softness of manner and grace of bearing, she seemed as tough as whalebone and nimble as a wild deer.[63]

But to these accomplishments, which sufficed Miss Bruce's predecessors, are added others.

> In these days of high-pressure education she could not but be full of accomplishments, playing scientific music at sight, singing a second, speaking three or four languages idiomatically, ungrammatically, and with a fair accent. She knew how to work embroidery, knit shooting-hose, and send people in to dinner according to their rank without fear of a mistake. On the other hand, she was but a moderate historian, sacred or profane. . . .Of household affairs she had some vague glimmerings.[64]

Despite the somewhat acidulous tone, Whyte-Melville evidently believes that as a modern woman Hester is still

sound, for he has her read, still, Thackeray and Tom Moore. She "thought in her heart Vanity Fair and the Loves of the Angels the two finest works in the language."[65]

To Whyte-Melville, the change in the position of woman is less a matter of education and of intellect than of social propriety and custom. As early as his first novel, together with an acknowledgement of improved morals among the men and of the decline of the dandiacal body, he places a comment on the change in attitude toward women:[66]

> That chivalrous devotion to the other sex, of which the last generation preserved at least the outward semblance, had been completely laid aside and a studied carelessness adopted in its stead, which was anything but flattering to their understanding or their charms.[67]

Digby goes on to blame women themselves for their habit "which regulates their own urbanity to an associate in an inverse proportion to the neglect he is at no pains to conceal."[68] As the novels appear in chronological sequence the young women become increasingly daring, independent, and reckless of reputation, although even the most daring of them must preserve some regard for surface respectability at least. To incur a verdict of society that she is bad style is for the climber to commit social suicide, and few of Whyte-Melville's heroines are brave enough to give up the prospect of being accepted in good society. (Satanella is the most independent, perhaps.) Even Jane Lee in Black but Comely devotes her energies, shrewdness, and daring to

the protection of a precarious respectability. Launched upon her career in London society, she finds herself among those who frequent the suburban resorts without engagements elsewhere and "who, perhaps simply because they are not asked, would rather be dining in Belgrave Square." She realizes that the men cannot secure her acceptance among ladies and resolves from the first "to eschew those doubtful dames who are neither quite in nor quite out of society, but who have a great deal of fun, and drive many a successful foray in a certain Debatable Land of their own between the borders of 'found charming' and 'found out.'"[69]

> Therefore, Beltenebrosa's voice was low, her manner exceedingly calm and quiet. No flashes of Southern sentiment, no bursts, no Southern mirth; above all, no symptoms of gratification in flattery the most delicate, homage the most profound. These things ought to be accepted as a matter of right, and nobody should ever hint she was bad style![70]

But though the pattern of social propriety remains unchanged, the modification mentioned in Digby Grand continues. In Contraband the novelist remarks that "in these days it is the affectation of society to be natural, and nobody can dispute the advantage of such a change from that pompous reserve and frozen insensibility which represented good breeding some five-and-twenty years ago."[71] (In Good for Nothing just ten years, not twenty-five, before he had said:

> Total impassibility is the chief qualification for the charmed circle. Are you pleased? you must by no means exult and clap your hands. Are you disgusted?

> you shall stamp not, neither shall you swear. A loud laugh is s solecism only second in enormity to a wet cheek. To be seen with the latter, it is needless to observe, would condemn the sufferer at once. If you would be respected, you must never subject yourself to pity; if you would have influence, you must never seek for sympathy.)[72]

The growing freedom of woman is evident in the recreations which she can participate in, and her admission to the game of lawn tennis marks another increase in her omnipresence:

> Now that lawn-tennis has displaced croquet, and become the engrossing occupation of both sexes under five-and-thirty, at all hours of the day, how is he /the English parson, who is subjected to more continuous distraction than St. Anthony/ to escape? Every garden and pleasure-ground in his own and other parishes is filled with Houris--black-eyed, blue-eyed, grey-eyes (the last very dangerous), proffering claret-cup instead of sherbert, and waving their scarfs, green or otherwise, to the true believer, if only they can persuade him to believe in them! Eyes, cheeks, and lips glow with exercise and health; shapely forms take every imaginable attitude of grace and freedom in the exigencies of the game.[73]

Footnotes CHAPTER XI.

1. In M. or N., for example. Tom Ryfe meets the men in the Row and at the race tracks, but does not meet their wives or enter their homes.

2. Although this remains true throughout the novels, there is evidence in the later novels that more and more, enterprising women could make their way while ignoring female despots if they manage the right men.

3. General Bounce, p. 126. Compare above Chap. X, Sec. 2, the quotation from Good for Nothing, p. 103. See also The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 252.

4. The Duchess of Merthyr-Tydvil in The Brookes of Bridlemere, for example, and Rose Erith, the Marchioness, in Black but Comely.

5. "Though the world of ball-goers and diners-out ignores such distinctions, a strong political party, hungering for office, had its eye on him already" (Satanella, p. 163).

6. At one, without further explanation, he introduces a flattering picture of a hostess, presumably one recognizable to his readers: Lady Billesdon of The White Rose (p. 4), "that great and good woman." He speaks of "her quiet matronly brow" and attributes to her a "stern sense of duty," when she stands for five hours receiving at the ball, and explains her parting wish that he had been amused to "her own kind heart."

7. Rosa, work cited, p. 27. The writer adds that the characteristic attitude of the widow toward the young man is a mixture of maternal affection and occasional flirtation. For the devotion of the young--and not too bright--soldier to a young widow, see Soldier Bill in Satanella and Algy in Black but Comely.

8. See above, Chap. IX, Sec. 3, last paragraph, on the ambivalence of Whyte-Melville's attitudes.

9. Kate Coventry, p. 31.

10. The same, p. 172. Mrs. Lumley is quite daring in emergency at Brighton. She swims out too far, and the tide carries her to a point opposite the bathing machines of the men. It is impossible to swim back and improper to walk. So when she spies an open and empty bathing machine,

she puts on its absent occupant's clothes and walks back to her own machine in male attire.

11. The same, pp. 194-195.

12. *Good for Nothing*, p. 63.

13. The same, p. 65.

14. The same place.

15. Black hair and an "undulating figure" were to be characteristic of Whyte-Melville's later heroines. (Cp. Flora Bellasys, the widow in *Guy Livingstone*, who is a young brunette. But she is a proud, haughty woman "unbridled in sensuality--remorseless in statecraft"--a type who appears in Whyte-Melville only in the historical novels [Valeria of *The Gladiators*, for example]). But the young fast widows in Whyte-Melville's novels are often blonde; Mrs. Lushington of *Satanella*, Mrs. Stripwell of *Black but Comely*, and Mrs. Lascelles of *Contraband*.

16. Particularly Mrs. Mantrap of *Digby Grand*, Countess Rose of *The Interpreter*, Mrs. Jushington of *Satanella*, Mme. de Montespan of *Sister Louise*, Mrs. Stripwell of *Black but Comely*, Lady Jane of *Roy's Wife* is somewhat more individualized, but ends the book condemned to a career of finally ineffective flirting.

17. *Satanella*, p. 74.

18. The same, p. 323.

19. *Bones and I*, p. 199.

20. The same, p. 200.

21. The same, p. 218.

22. Particularly in *The Gladiators* (for example, the scenes in which Valeria attempts to seduce the young Anglo-Saxon slave) and in *Sarchedon*.

23. The description of the young widow in Lawrence's *Guy Livingstone* (see above, Note 15, suggests that Whyte-Melville introduces into his historical novels a character to be found in novels of contemporary life which he does not feel able to handle in his own "society" novels.

Footnotes Chapter XI (Continued)

24. Compare with Kate Coventry the interesting heroine of Henry Kingsley's Leighton Court, Laura Seckerton, who is a much more dramatic character, but who like Kate finds escape in morning canters and is directed in the household by a Hannah-More-reading grandmother.

25. Kate Coventry, pp. 7-8.

26. The same, p. 23.

27. The same place.

28. The same work, p. 68.

29. The same, p. 61.

30. The same, pp. 164-165.

31. The same, p. 209.

32. The same, p. 235.

33. The same, pp. 255-256.

34. The same, p. 231.

35. The same, p. 233.

36. The same, p. 234.

37. Digby Grand, p. 213.

38. There is still disapproval. See above, Chap. v, Sec. 5.

39. Inside the Bar, p. 333.

40. The same, p. 334. Phoebe Higgs and Lucy Glitters of Surtees are the most famous examples (see Watson's study of Surtees and accounts of hunting literature generally). But echoes of this type occur in other novels. Smedley, in Lewis Arundel, Chap. xxiii, introduces a character who seems to be a cross between the two types. Lady Mary Goodwood, called Jack by her friends, a horsy woman, hunts, shoots, breaks in her own horses, and has ridden a hurdle race.

Footnotes Chapter XI (Continued)

41. A few not only do not ride but cannot. Louise in Sister Louise is one of the few who are too timid; Nell in Roy's Wife does not know how.

42. The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 26.

43. The same, p. 187.

44. The same, p. 275.

45. The same place.

46. The same place.

47. The same place.

48. General Bounce, p. 154.

49. The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 276.

50. The same, p. 277.

51. The same place. Compare Uncle John, p. 276. Percy Mortimer asks Annie to marry him. "Will you accept it?" "No," whispered Annie, rising from her seat to take his arm in a perfectly friendly manner, and guide him back to the ballroom."

52. P. 216.

53. Mrs. Braddon's Lady Audley's Secret, for example, appeared in 1862, Whyte-Melville's The Brookes of Bridlemere in 1864.

54. Satanella, p. 19.

55. The same, p. 14.

56. The same, p. 18. The passage answers the question of the writer in the Times Literary Supplement 16 June 1921 who after pointing out Kate Coventry's "nice feeling" and the fact that her horses are always perfection, comments "one wonders what she or Major Whyte-Melville would have said to that well-named horse Havoc of whom Mrs. Asquith says that he had 'a coat like the back of a violin.'"

57. Uncle John, p. 348.

58. The same, p. 349.

59. The same, p. 351.

60. The same place.

61. It was customary for a young horsewoman in the field to be escorted during the run by a reliable horseman. The Crown Princess of Austria during the season of 1878 was so piloted by one of the most daring of the Leicestershire horsemen (Apsley, work cited, p. 374).

62. Kate Coventry had attempted to jump, somewhat disastrously, but even twenty years later it is evidently customary for the ladies to go through a gate rather than to jump, a method which experienced horsemen actually preferred when it was possible.

63. Roy's Wife, p. 51.

64. The same, p. 52. Compare the accomplishments of Miss Merlin in Inside the Bar, and those of the Squire's blue stocking daughter in the same (p. 405).

65. The same place.

66. For another comment on the changes in manners among women, see Bones and I, p. 241.

67. Digby Grand, p. 261.

68. The same place. Henry Kingsley in Ravenshoe, Chap. lv, notices the new casualness toward women.

69. Black but Comely, p. 153.

70. The same place.

71. Contraband, p. 141.

72. Good for Nothing, p. 149.

73. Black but Comely, 309.

# CHAPTER XII

## On and Over the Line.

### Section (1) Adventuresses and Music Mistresses

In the heroines of the later novels several strains from the early novels merge, the music mistress and governess who must make her own way in the world, shut out by occupation and often by birth from society, and the proud daring woman whom disillusioning experience has stiffened and who makes her way by dash and wit, especially among the men. Mary Delaval of General Bounce and Ada Latimer of Good for Nothing[1] are the chief representatives of the first in the early novels, Miss Merlin[2] of Inside the Bar and, to a lesser extent, Mrs. Montpellier of Good for Nothing are the chief representatives of the second.

Like the later heroines in having a streak of pride, Mary Delaval and Ada Latimer are unlike them in their propriety and moral earnestness, relying not at all on daring and wit but upon a firm faith in God and a scrupulousness in act which stems not from shrewd calculations but from a sense of personal virtue. (This emphasis runs parallel to Whyte-Melville's serious treatment of his dandies in the early novels contrasted with the lighter touch of the late novels.) Mary is the daughter of an officer whom worldly considerations prevented from legaliz-

ing his relationship with her mother. After his death (somewhat bathetically he "caught cold out duck-shooting")[3] Mary's mother, who had been on the stage, retired to the country and reared her daughter to be self-sufficient, to put not her trust in men, and to anchor her faith firmly in reliance on man's Creator. Mary has a "tall graceful figure, with its majestic sweep and lofty gestures--her goddess-like head, set on as if the Greek had carved its proportions with his unerring chisel."[4] With this and with

> her dark, deep-set grey eye, with its long lashes, veiling a world of penetration, reflection, ay, and sentiment, for the happy man who could bid it kindle into love--her faultless profile and firm determined mouth, her lovable brow, with its masses of thick, dark brown hair, plainly braided on each side of that pale, haunting face, beautiful in the deep expression which arrives only with the maturity of womanhood.[5]

she might have been a queen. Her life is one of drudgery in Miss Primrose's school (her one pleasure listening to a military band, a habit which first brings her to the notice of Major D'Orville and other dandies). During the course of the book while she is companion to Blanche Kettering, after leaving the school, she suffers long and silently in her love for Charles Kettering, a career somewhat interrupted by the attentions of Major D'Orville and her reforming of his character. At the end her life is momentarily brightened by the knowledge that Charles loves her, and after his death she spends her life at St. Swithin's, working among the poor, and wandering alone

along the beach, listening to the ocean.

> Care had hollowed the eyes and wasted the pale cheek, and streaked the masses of dark hair with many a silver line, but the deep expression of holy beauty that sat on those marble features was that of an angel--some spirit sorrowing for the spirit-band from which it was parted, and yearning for its home.[6]

Ada Latimer[7] first makes her appearance at a morning musical, where her quiet beauty impresses more than one listener, especially Gilbert Orme. Less stern than Mary Delaval, she is fairer, gentle, and lovable.[8] More fortunate than Mary, she is legitimate, the daughter of a penniless officer and a Viennese Grafinn. Major Glyn had died of fever, but the Grafinn had lived to urge her beautiful daughter into marriage to a Mr. Latimer. Although the Grafinn could not be blamed for her lack of perception, Latimer was not quite an English gentleman. Handsome, though flashy, he had a weakness for gambling, eventually deserted Ada. The Graffin did not live to see the failure of her plans. Though more lovable in the author's eyes, Ada lacks Mary's imperiousness and her impeccability leads her along an unexciting path of renunciation and virtue. She insists that Gilbert wait a year before marrying her, for she fears that his character is not yet firm enough for the trials of domesticity, especially since he must adjust himself to being the husband of a music mistress. When her supposedly deceased husband turns up before the year is over, she renounces Gilbert entirely. There is a

touch of self-righteousness in her speech, and though the reader may wonder at the feverish career of dissipation which Gilbert escapes into, he may sympathize with Gilbert's suspicion that Ada lacks passion.

> "Gilbert, you have often told me that my happiness was dearer to you than your own; that you were capable of any effort, any sacrifice, for my welfare. It was my pride and pleasure to believe this, to know that you were different from others, to feel that I could trust you and depend upon you to the last. The time has come to put you to the proof. There is right, Gilbert, and there is wrong. Would you ask me to turn out of the path that leads to heaven even for your sake! Would you wish to see me lost body and soul? . . .Join me in the painful effort. I need never then be ashamed of the past. Do not deprive me of my only consolation, but let me carry with me that memory pure and unsullied into another world."[9]

(Her renunciation is not wholly successful, for at the end Ada is haunted by the suspicion that she has driven Gilbert to his death, that he died by his own hand and so is lost to her forever, in the next world as well.)

Miss Merlin is of different caliber entirely. In the story (Inside the Bar) she appears only at a distance, a dashing, daring, attractive horsewoman, who rides among the first without losing her femininity (her saucy French maid, presumably, is testimony to that). Her story is one of disappointed love and of the death of the man who loved her but whom necessity forbade an imprudent match. Like Mary Delaval and Ada Latimer--and like many of the heroines to come,--she is musical, but she has not been known to touch a piano since her tragedy.[10]

Although the later heroines are compounded of the Mary Delevals and Miss Merlins, other characters in the early novels foreshadow aspects of their nature. Most of the women in the early novels have pride, even the "lovable" Ada Latimer: Mary Cave, the haughty and capable heroine of Holmby House;[11] Kate Cotherstone, the bright but unscrupulous climber of Tilbury Nogo (though she remains unredeemed in that novel);[12] Coralie de Rivolte, the fiery and passionate dancer of Digby Grand;[13] Mrs. Montpellier, the amiable but somewhat slang widow of Good for Nothing. The pattern of Mary Cave's career--the final and feminine surrender to love and masculine protection of a proud and independent woman--is the closest parallel, although in external details the career of Kate Cotherstone is repeated elaborately.[17]

## Section (2) The Later Heroines: The Woman with a Past.

Six of the later novels are novels of contemporary society, and with one exception, the new heroine takes the center of the stage. (The exception is Roy's Wife which ventures into the problem of the socially mixed marriage.) Maud Bruce of M. or N., the first one, differs from the others by birth, having her entry into society from the start.[15] Jin Ross of Contraband, Blanche Douglas of Satanella, and Laura Blair of Uncle John variations of the

same person, the woman of unknown antecedents who by shrewd use of her beauty and wit makes her way into society.[16] Jane Lee of Black but Comely is a further development, a more capable and daring young woman. Most of them are dark of hair and eyes, lithe of figure and movement, and possessors of beautiful voices and musical talent.[17] They attract and make victims of older and maturer men[18] although Jin, Blanche, and Laura are in love with young dandies who have turned their hearts elsewhere. All are humbled and redeemed before the end of the novels, though not all find the solace of a male breast upon which to pillow their heads.[19]

Jin Ross of Contraband had been brought up by an Aunt who impressed her with the face that Jin was not really her niece and sent Jin to a convent school in Dieppe. When Jin was transferred to Paris, she escaped with the help of a young man to whom she gave the slip an hours after her escape. A runaway school-girl in Paris with no money and no friends, she pawned a jacket and bracelet to keep her going for a few days, then obtained an engagement to sing in a cafe in the outskirts of Paris. "In a low dress, at sixteen, singing to two hundred people I had never seen before, I give you my word I wasn't the least shy."[20] Her debut was a success: "I ran through a succession of shakes, and squeals, and sometimes sang false, to the delight of an enthusiastic audience and my own intense

gratification."[21] Later, though married to an admirer who had been in the audience on her first night, she continued to sing. After her first child was born, her husband deserted her. The boy was drowned later in a flood at Lyons while Jin was singing at Avignon. When the story opens, Jin has spurned the attentions of Sir Henry Hallaton, left his employ (she has been Helen Hallaton's companion), and struck up a friendship with Rose Lascelles, young, wealthy, and a widow. The two set about to plague the male heart. But despite Jin's vindictiveness toward men, she has a heart, and the reappearance of her child (and husband) and the attraction of young Frank Vanguard weaken her resolution. Before the end of the novel she renounces Frank, unwilling to make him a victim of her unscrupulous husband, who has also reappeared, and watches at the death bed of her little boy, where she is finally purged and humbled.

> Perhaps even in their /the angels'/ lustrous happiness, they rejoiced with celestial sympathy over the lonely penitent who flung herself down by her child's deathbed, and poured out her heart in prayer that, through any sacrifice, any suffering, she might follow where he was gone before. Perhaps they knew how poor, contrite, sorrowing Jin Ross had made her first step on the narrow path that leads to the Shining Gate, over which, for sinners of far deeper dye than her, stands emblazoned the eternal promise--"Knock, and it shall be opened unto you!"
>
> THE END [22]

The past of Blanche Douglas in Satanella remains a mystery to the reader as well as to the people of the

novel, and the effect is one of concentration upon the difficult relationship between Blanche and the General.[23] Laura's past is recorded in Uncle John in detail. Like most young men and women in the novels she was left parentless at an early age. She ran away from school to marry a man she had only seen in her walks to and from church and had never spoken to (he wrote beautiful letters). Her husband turned out to be a sharper, and Laura became his accomplice, tipping off her husband by sitting where she could see his opponents' hands and playing "treacherous sonatas",[24] as a code. Brussels, Paris, Vienna, Trieste, Italy, Greece--then Russia, Egypt, India, Japan, Australia, South America, and New York, where a Yankee discovered them and demanded partnership. At this point Laura left, taught music in New York and Boston, finally returned to England. (When the story opens she is companion to Mrs. Emily Dennison, who had been in love with Laura's father, a profligate who had courted Aunt Emily, then Miss Bland, deceiving her into thinking him a single man.)

Laura's travels were not without romance, and her folder which she examines before her marriage to the Rev. Algernon Lexley conceals a dozen photographs over three of which she lingers: a young Austrian officer whom she dismissed after he fought a duel for her; the stupid Hungarian nobleman whom she could have married; and Victor, the young Italian who was drowned and over whose picture

she sheds tears, whispering "Oh, my darling--my darling." "What a dream it is now, that island in the Greek sea, and the bench beneath the cedars, and those long Italian lessons, with your dark eyes looking into mine." She thinks of "that brave beautiful flace sleeping forty fathoms deep in the blue Mediterranean": "Oh, Victor, I wish I was with you there--at rest forever, by your side." [25]

In physical appearance Blanche Douglas is described the most fully, and is characteristic of the group. When she is introduced it is a mild February morning when even South Audley Street and its tributaries seem to "exhale a balmy fragrance from the breath of spring." Blanche is seated at the piano, "drawing from the keys . . . sighs of piteous plaint. . . sobs of sweet seductive sorrow." If the baker below, whose soul is ravished by the music, could peep into the room he would see:

> A woman of twenty-five, tall, slim-waisted, with a wealth of blue-black hair, all made fast and coiled away beneath her riding-hat in shining folds massive as a three-inch cable. A woman of graceful gestures, undulating like the serpent; of a shapely figure, denoting rather the graces of action than the beauty of repose; lithe, self-reliant, full of latent energy, betraying in every movement an inborn pride, tameless though kept down, and incurable as Lucifer's before his fall.
>
> The white hands moving so deftly over the keys were strong and nervous, with large blue veins and taper fingers; such hands as denote a vigorous nature and a resolute will--such hands as strike without pity, and hold with tenacious grasp--such hands as many a lofty head has bowed its pride to kiss, and thought no shame.

> Lower and lower she bent over them while she played--softer and softer sank and swelled, and died away, the sad suggestive notes, bursting at last into a peal and crash of harmony, through which there came a short quick gasp for breath, like a sob. Then she shut the pianoforte with a bang, and walked to the glass over the fireplace.
>
> It reflected a strangely fascinating face, so irregular of features that women sometimes called it positively plain; but on which the other sex felt neither better nor wiser men when they looked. The cheek-bones, chin, and jaws were prominent; the eyebrows, though arched, too thick; and for feminine beauty, the mouth too firm, in spite of its broad white teeth, and dark shade pencilled on the upper lip, in spite even of its saucy curl and bright bewildering smile.
>
> But when she lifted her flashing eyes, fringed in their long black lashes, there was no more to be said. They seemed to blaze and soften, shine and swim, all in one glance that went straight to a man's heart and made him wince with a thrill akin to pain.
>
> Pale women protested she had too much colour, and vowed she painted; but no cosmetics ever yet concocted could have imitated her deep rich tints, glowing like those of the black-browned beauties one sees in Southern Europe, as if she, too, had caught warmth and vitality from their generous climate and their sunny, smiling skies. When she blushed it was like the glory of noon-day.[26]

Blanche's immediate predecessors, Maud Bruce and Jin Ross, were also dark and implacable.[27] Jin is pale, perhaps a little too thin, but has splendid black eyes.

> Over her rather irregular features and her too resolute mouth and chin was cast a wild, mournful expression, half pathetic, half defiant, expressly calculated, it would seem, for the subjugation of mankind, especially that portion who have outlived the fresher and more healthy tastes of youth.

Like her successor, Jin has "masses of black hair" and a "graceful figure, lithe as a panther's."[28]

Jin too is musical, possessing "a full, sweet voice, of rare compass."[29]

Blanche's successors show variations upon the pattern though the inheritance is clear. Laura particularly differs in appearance, having golden brown instead of black hair, being Junoesque (like Mary Delaval of the earlier novels) rather than lithe and sinuous in movement. But like the others she is proud and determined:

> Her complexion was pale, but with the pallor of a delicate skin, not a languid circulation; and her clear-cut features, like those we see on a cameo, were almost stern in their regularity. It was a face that looked as if it could be very immovable, very pitiless, yet that it would be well worth while to rouse into expression should the statue wake up to life.[30]

Like the others she is a musician, a pianist with a talent for improvisation. At a country house party she lets her fingers "wander over the keys in a slow, wild movement."[31] "There were chords--there were variations--there was much brilliancy of execution--but through it all ran a sad sweet strain."[32] As she plays cards and conversation are neglected as over the faces of the listeners comes "the gentle, wistful look of those who recall an unforgotten sorrow, who turn once more, resigned but spirit-broken, to say farewell across a grave."[33] In Jane Lee the novelist turns again to black hair, dark eyes, and the lithe figure, making his heroine a gypsy foundling, a singer and actress by nature, shrewd and worldly-wise from childhood (she is

reared by a London Jew). Her problem as she daringly makes her way into society with the aid of Lord St. Moritz is to moderate her passionate nature ("no flashes of Southern sentiment, no bursts, no Southern mirth"),[34] and when she does come to terms with society it is through repentance and religion, not through submission to the proprieties of society.

### Section (3) The Adventuress Redeemed

All the heroines of the later novels pass through two phases, the first one of worldly ambition and determined manipulation of male emotions, the second one of sacrifice, suffering and finally repentance. The transition between the two phases is usually ill-contrived, so that the denouement does violence to the characters as originally conceived. This weakness is least evident in Satanella in which Whyte-Melville maintains Blanche's integrity and consistency of character to the end, and the alternative ending there is a might-have-been rather than an actuality.[35] In Uncle John the novelist handles the shift more skilfully, for Laura, wearied after her long career with her gambler-husband, is quite ready to settle down in security even at the expense of compromise, and though she prefers Horace Maxwell the young dandy, and indeed, expects to snare him ("In three days I ought to

bring him thoroughly and scientifically into bondage"),[36] she is ready to chance a much duller match with the Rev. Algernon Lexley, though not without one final attempt to capture Maxwell during an intimate game of billiards.[37] Her shrewdness in perceiving Mr. Lexley's honesty and simplicity and her gratitude for such single-hearted devotion leads her wisely to explain her past to him, and his generous response lays the basis for her return, later, of his love. This gratitude, and her relief at final security, insures a period at least of settled married life, sufficient time for her to comprehend Lexley's character and to return his love before her restless habits and longing for a brighter existence disrupt the marriage. (In all this Laura is a more comprehensible character than Jin, even than Blanche, for the infatuation which these two conceive for conventional young officer-dandies hardly fits their characters as women of the world, matured by disillusioning experience, and with eyes on the main chance. Prudence and worldly expediency aside, the reader might find them more credible responding to the older men who are their most devoted lovers.) Jane Lee's final redemption through repentance and work among the poor is perhaps the most unlikely of the series, for although she has experienced occasional qualms about the debt of five hundred pounds which she owes Mervyn Strange, there is little to suggest that she either could not find a way

out of her temporary difficulties by some other means than a spiritual appeal to the man she had cheated.

### Section (4) Successful Adventuring

In the endings of these novels, then, Whyte-Melville shows that new styles and manners have not changed his conception of the salvation suitable for the Victorian Englishwoman. It is early in the novels that the influence of the contemporary fashions[38] shows, particularly in his preoccupation with the adventuress. Governesses and music mistresses were looked upon habitually as adventuresses,[39] and Whyte-Melville's representatives of the type are Free Lances, "Free Lances of life, called by the newspapers 'Aspasias'" and "Hyde Park Goddesses."[40] Judging from the novels of Whyte-Melville, they were somewhat more successful than their male counterparts, for the fast men "not quite gentlemen" seldom make their way past the members of their own sex into the fashionable west just beyond the strict border-line. But women with mysterious pasts and fast reputations, "bad style," could establish themselves, though not, perhaps, in the very highest circles, if they were clever enough in their selection of admirers or of protectresses of their own sex, especially if they were able to split the opposition and pit one dowager-arbiter against another. (Bella Jones of Good for

Nothing and Jane Lee of Black but Comely both receive invitations to houses which insure their general acceptance in society because their aristocratic admirers were able to take advantage of such competition.)

Of the group, Maud is already in society and Laura enters immediately under the protection of Aunt Emily and secures her husband before a season has really begun. Jin Ross, Blanche Douglas, and Jane Lee, however, spend much of their energy in making a place for themselves. They are successively more daring in their methods. Jin Ross puts herself under the protection of Mrs. Lascelles, the wealthy young widow.

> Everybody knew who Mrs. Lascelles was (it would have denoted rustic ignorance not to be aware that she had missed becoming Lady St. Giles), and, after the first week or two, the companion who went about with her was no longer "a Miss Roos," but had established her position as "Miss Ross--clever girl with black eyes--cousin, you know, of dear Rose."[41]

Blanche Douglas, although she puts herself under the chaperonage of Mrs. Lushington, is more independent of her own sex and relies upon selecting the right admirers. By the good-natured members of her own sex, she is considered to be "oddish and rather bad style" although there is "no harm in her." Those who are less good-natured consider her "loud, bold, horsey, more than queer."[42] But she holds her own, and the old men fall in love with her. "My admirers," she tells a Mrs. Cullender, "are romantic--very,

and rheumatic also, _a faire pleurer_. The combination, my dear, is touching, but exceedingly inconvenient."[43] Not entirely inconvenient, however, for on the arms of her admirals and generals she can go nearly anywhere (admirals were fickle, so she "scarcely allowed them to count in her score; but at one time she had seven general-officers on the list with colonels and majors in proportion").[44] Jane Lee is less prudent than Blanche, puts her eggs in one basket, and risks scandal when she comes to London as "Mme. Paravant, nee Beltenebrosa" and becomes the protege of an aristocratic roue, Lord St. Moritz. Final success for all these lies clearly in a suitable marriage, to which their not unresourceful energies are bent, but the novelist is incurably sentimental and his Jin Rosses and Blanche Douglases (even his Kate Cremornes) turn down the main chance when it appears, for their hearts by that time are directed elsewhere.

## Section (5) Life below Stairs

Whyte-Melville's picture of London society is limited for the most part to the upper middle classes and the minor aristocracy. Just as the very great enter into the novels but seldom, so life below stairs in the London season seldom intrudes. The reader becomes aware of ladies' maids preparing heroines for an evening out, of

superannuated waiters in the clubs on St. James Street,[45] the waiters who are never young but who never die, but the ubiquitous and omniscient valet who knows the intimate details of his master and his master's friends does not appear.[46] There are no scenes like that between Major Pendennis and Morgan.[47] Grooms, as one might expect in novels which portray men and women who are particularly at home in the saddle, are the single exception. They are somewhat independent retainers in Whyte-Melville's pages, properly respectful but unhurried in the execution of their duties whatever the impatience of their masters.[48] Grooms fall clearly into two classes, the gnarled, hard-tongued groom from the country, and the smart, fashionable, new-style groom from the city, who apes his betters and maintains a snobbery of his own. Both are represented in Market Harborough, in Isaac, Mrs. Sawyer's groom and Mr. Tip-Top, the Honble. Crasher's groom.[49]

## Section (6) Escape from Belgravia

Life in the novels seldom gets beyond Belgravia. The country house scenes bring the reader not to the country but to an extension of West End society, for example. And the ventures to other lands is not so much a visit to those lands as an escape from Belgravia. One escape is part of the rhythm of the season, between the

end of the London season, and the beginning of the hunting season. Sportsmen go to Scotland to hunt fowl or deer.[50] Others turn to yachting and to the seaside resorts. Mrs. Lushington in Satanella, for example, yachts at Cowes, remaining a good deal at anchor.

> For herself and her set Cowes was nothing in the world but London gone down to the sea. Shorter petticoats, and hats instead of bonnets, made the whole difference. There were the same attractions, the same interests, the same intrigues. Even the same bores went to and fro, and bored, as they breathed, more freely in the soft Channel air. Altogether, it was fresher and quieter, but, if possible, stupider than Pall Mall.[51]

Resorts like Bath provide fashionable life for those uneqal, through age or ill-health, to the full rigors of the London season.[52] Foreign resorts like Baden-Baden[53] and Dieppe[54] serve the same purpose, and provide in addition more permanent escape for those who have left debts behind them.[55] But on the Continent too the English re-create fashionable London, and the scenes are limited to the hotels, dining rooms, and gambling rooms, and occasionally a brief trial at mountain climbing.[56]

For more permanent escape, from complete ruin or heartbreak there is India or the New World. Officers whose ruin does not involve loss of honor can find work and self-respect by following the call to duty: so Major D'Orville in General Bounce, Sir Archibald in The Brookes of Bridlemere (though his exile is over when the story opens), and General St. Josephs in Satanella. For others particularly

the young, seeking to live down a past or to recoup a lost fortune and return to England there is the New World (there are no colonizers in Whyte-Melville's world): so Digby Grand, though fortune intervenes to prevent his sailing, Gilbert Orme in Good for Nothing (Australia), Gerard Ainslie in The White Rose (California), and Mr. Roy in Roy's Wife (South America); so too occasionally a resourceful woman who returns to England by making her reputation as actress or singer in New York, as did Fanny Draper ("Mme. Molinara") in The White Rose. But in Whyte-Melville's novels the reader does not follow such adventures in detail,[57] and such escapes are generally suspensions in the story until a home-coming permits the novel to continue.

## Section (7) Over the Line

Beyond Belgravia, over a line which is social as well as physical, exists another world which seldom appears in Whyte-Melville's novels. Occasionally in social affairs from which the ladies of Belgravia are excluded, women from this other world enter the scene, at picnics in Richmond Park, perhaps, or dinners in Brompton. Like the fast, slang young ladies who are "bad style," these women fare better in Whyte-Melville's novels than their male counterparts, the men who are "not quite

gentlemen."[58] Among the few from the world outside Belgravia, excepting the actresses who appear at Richmond Park[59] is Mrs. Battersea, "a celebrity of a certain standing in certain circles, not quite without the pale of decent society, yet as near the edge as was possible, short of actual expulsion."[60] Mrs. Battersea is

> one of those people to be seen at reviews, races, and all open-air gatherings within twenty miles of London--at flower-shows, plays, operas, and charity concerts in the Metropolis; but nobody ever met her at a dinner party, a ball, or a drum. To sum up--men like Picard called her a stunner; ladies like Mrs. Lascelles said she was bad style.[61]

(Mrs. Lascelles at the same time affords the protection of her chaperonage to a young woman whose career as a model, cafe singer, and mother of an illegitimate child--she does not know until the end of the novel that it is really legitimate--might raise questions about Rose Lascelles' consistency.) But despite her bad style, Mrs. Battersea has had her tragedy and has lost the man she loved. Her younger sister, Kate Cremorne, "living so to speak, on the borderland between good and bad society,"[62] is fast and gay and in pursuit of a suitable husband. But she has a warm heart which invests her with a sort of innocence. In the words of a cabman, "Blessed if she don't look as bold as Britannia, the beauty! and as hinnocent as a nosegay all the while!" It is Kate who finds and cares for Jin Ross with her child in a "shabby refuge" and who gives "neither a thought nor a sigh" to the lively Richmond dinner-party

which she gives up "while she bathed Jin's pale temples with eau-de-cologne, and rested the dark drooping head on her snowy bosom, pressing it to her own warm, wilful, reckless, restless heart." At the end, when Sir Henry, no mean catch, proposes and Kate has her main chance, Sir Henry receives his final humiliation, just end to a career of philandering, getting "a kindly, courteous, and dignified refusal from the wild, wayward girl, who bade him understand clearly that she respected herself too much to affect an attachment it was impossible to feel for a man old enough to be her father!"[63]

Two other aspects of life beyond Belgravia occasionally show in the novels, one the life of trade and commerce,[64] the other the life of the lower classes.[65] But here again it is only when Belgravia becomes unavoidably involved, when a tradesman's daughter, perhaps, tries to enter society,[66] or when a gentleman by birth is forced to enter trade to amass an income which will support him more fashionably;[67] or when a young dandy spiraling into ruin finds the gambling table of a silver hell his last resource;[68] or a house-breaker plans, in similar surroundings, a raid upon a fashionable dwelling house;[69] or when a young lady condescendingly works among the poor.[70] But the ventures into "Samaria"[71] are infrequent and life outside the West End remains a shadow world in the novels.[72]

## Footnotes CHAPTER XII

1. That Ada Latimer was a particularly popular heroine is suggested by the reference to her in Smart's first novel, Breezie Langton and by the fact that this is the only other novel besides Market Harborough mentioned in Galsworthy's novels.

2. Miss Merlin and Inside the Bar is neglected by most of those who have written about Whyte-Melville, but her importance as a representative type in the novels is noted by the writer of an article in The Field, 1878, who names her, rather than Kate Coventry, when speaking of Whyte-Melville's way of repeating characters in his novels.

3. General Bounce, p. 33.

4. The same, p. 35.

5. The same place.

6. The same work, p. 335.

7. In Kate Coventry, pp. 55-56,

8. Good for Nothing.

9. The same, p. 257.

10. For an account of Mrs. Montpellier, see above, Chap. xi, Sec. 2.

11. Compare, particularly, Maud of M. or N.

12. Compare, particularly, Laura of Uncle John.

13. Compare, particularly, Jane, of Black but Comely.

14. In Uncle John.

15. Compare Adelaide in Henry Kingsley's Ravenshoe, a comparison which links Maud to Thackeray's Beatrix (Kingsley's novel mingles elements of Henry Esmond and Vanity Fair, both).

16. For an account of the relationship among the three, see also above, Chap. VI, Sec. 4.

Footnotes CHAPTER XII (Continued)

17. Whyte-Melville's governess-adventuresses are variations of a type found in other novels. For example, Miss Arabella Crofton in Smedley's Harry Coverdale's Courtship, Chap. xix, who tutors Kate in the ways of the world, is a "tall, dark looking creature with great flashing eyes like a typsies." And Kate Marsden, her pupil, has "tact and talent; a soul of fire beneath an exterior of ice" (Chap. xvii).

18. Cp. Mrs. Braddon's Lady Audley's Secret. See Vol. I, Chap. xxv, for a passage on women as the stronger sex.

19. See M. or N., 276, for a typical passage about redemption through suffering. Also the last chapters of Contraband, entitled successively "Remorseful," "Repentant," and "Reclaimed."

20. Contraband, p. 39.

21. The same place.

22. The same work, p. 365.

23. For an account of the relationship between Blanche and the General, see below, Chap. xv, Sec. 2.

24. Uncle John, p. 120.

25. The same, p. 142.

26. Satanella, pp. 11-13.

27. See description of Maud, above, Chap. vi, Sec. 1.

28. Contraband, p. 12.

29. The same, p. 59.

30. Uncle John, p. 35. Laura, like Marie Antoinette in Rosine which follows two novels later has grey eyes and regular features.

31. The same, p. 65.

32. The same, p. 66.

33. The same place.

Footnotes Chapter XII (Continued)

34. Black but Comely, Chap. xxv.

35. For the end of Contraband, see above, this chapter, Section 2.

36. Uncle John, p. 55.

37. See discussion below, Chap. xiii, of the scenes in the country house.

38. See above, Chap. iv, Sec.5.

39. See Smedley's Lewis Arundel, Chap. i. See also reference to Smedley Harry Coverdale's Courtship, above, Note 17.

40. Ouida, Under Two Flags, Chap. v.

41. Contraband, p. 33.

42. Satanella, p. 16.

43. The same, p. 17.

44. The same, p. 18.

45. General Bounce, p. 206, for example.

46. Nor the omniscient lady's maid. Contrast Mrs. Braddon's Lady Audley's Secret, Vol. II, Chap. vlii.

47. One exception is The White Rose, one of the novels which shows in several ways the direct influence of Thackeray. In this Norah's butler Smart is a valuable source of information for Gerard; and dandy Burton has a valet of incredible omniscience (see p. 365 of the novel).

48. See Black but Comely, p. 53, for example.

49. See discussion below, Chap. xiv, of hunting field and race track scenes. Another groom who is also a swell is Miss Merlin's groom in Inside the Bar, p. 325. For still another groom see M. or N., 137 ff.

50. See Scotland and the Moors, appended to Tilbury Nogo. Also Good for Nothing, p. 53, Digby Grand, Chap. ix, and Satanella, p. 318.

Footnotes Chapter XII (Continued)

51. Satanella, p. 321.

52. See Tilbury Nogo, Chap. xxvi, for example. Mrs. Nogo goes to Bath to recover from her headaches, and is still there ten years later. Or Contraband, in which Uncle Joseph retreats to Buxton after his difficult time with Jin Ross, and much to the envy of Sir Henry engages in a romance with a widow almost "as round, and as gouty as himself" (p. 358).

53. The White Rose.

54. Black but Comely, p. 7.

55. See The White Rose, and Contraband.

56. The Continent as an escape after a duel does not appear in Whyte-Melville's novels as in other novels of the time, but Whyte-Melville does not permit any duel to be actually fought in his novels.

57. The chief exception is The White Rose and its scenes in Germany. Contrast, for example, Smedley's sequence of chapters in Italy (Lewis Arundel) or Henry Kingsley's sequence in Austria (Silcote of Silcotes) and his Australian novels.

58. See above, Chap. ix, Sec. 5, for comment on Kate Cremorne's response to Picard.

59. See particularly Digby Grand, Good for Nothing, The White Rose, and Black but Comely.

60. Contraband, p. 76.

61. The same, p. 77.

62. The same, p. 305.

63. Contraband, p. 357.

64. See above, Chap. ix, Sec. 3, "The Gentleman Manque."

65. See below, Chap. xvi, Sec. 2, discussion of the lower classes.

Footnotes Chapter XII (Continued)

66. Bella Jones in Good for Nothing.

67. John Gordon, also in Good for Nothing.

68. Digby Grand, Black but Comely.

69. General Bounce and M. or N.

70. Uncle John.

71. See Contraband, Chap. xxvi, "In Samaria."

72. To these situations might be added gypsy life; also at least two visits to cottages on the outskirts of London (the cottage of Latimer in Good for Nothing and that of the money lender in The Brookes of Bridlemere).

# CHAPTER XIII

## Country House: Belgravia Extended.

### Section (1) Limitations of Whyte-Melville's Picture

Whyte-Melville's country house life is an extension, usually, of the fashionable world which gathers in West End London for the season and then scatters to the country for the winter hunting. It is neither the life of the great landed gentry--there are no Dukes of Omnium, no Gatherum Castles--nor the life of the rural squire who is farmer and justice of peace.[1] (Nor are there Squire Westerns, except for a few touches in the early novels, possibly under the influence of Surtees.)[2] In Henry Kingsley's Silcote of Silcotes, Tom Silcote says, "You must not talk of county society or of country houses here. There are neither one nor the other here. There is semi-detached villa society."[3] His description applies to the novels of Whyte-Melville, where country life is confined to the hunting field, to dinner parties, and days and evenings of house parties with fashionable guests, in the drawing room, the conservatory, and the billiard room.[4]

### Section (2) The Squire

When the farmer-squire appears, in the early novels, he is usually caricatured and made an object of

comedy (Nelly Spinnithorne and her boorish cousin in Digby Grand, Squire John Topthorne in Tilbury Nogo, and the red-faced awkward Squire Haycock of Kate Coventry). Jack Topthorne, who becomes Tilbury Nogo's brother-in-law, is concerned entirely with his hounds and his horses, is inclined to be surly and brusque, a "varmint-looking fellow enough." "Despite his stained coat, with its abominable collar, despite his drab cords, cloth topes, huge hunting-cap, uncouth gestures, and ungainly seat, there was a game flash in his eye that looked like killing."[5] His dog is an ugly brute, "with mealy bay coat," and short, though he has some "good working points about him."[7] If Topthorne's presence at the hunt guaranteed a kill, it was his only virtue, and after his sister leaves, Topthorne gives up his hounds, "relapsing into a sort of yeoman--never seeing a visitor, never associating with his equals, fast losing the manners and habits of a gentleman."[8]

In Inside the Bar, Whyte-Melville provides sketches of the "real British yeoman" (Tom Turnbull)[9] and of the old-fashioned squire, Plumtree.[10]

> Although of the plainest and most unsophisticated of squires, he was obviously a high-bred gentleman; and his old-fashioned attire--for he had not discarded the blue coat, yellow waistcoat, and white stockings of his younger days--was perfectly in keeping with his fresh old face, round and rosy as a winter apple; his fine bald head and stately figure, deep of chest, stout of limb, and somewhat protuberant of stomach.[11]

(Before the scene is over the Squire offers a great deal of

sound advice about horses and hunting.) Much later, in Uncle John, Whyte-Melville speaks of the title-character as a squire "than whom nobody could toil more indefatiguably at county business, nor take more trouble to promote the welfare of his laborers, tenantry, and neighbors."[12] But this is comment in passing, and the squire is seen only in his den,[13] his one retreat from the nagging tongue of his wife.

It is in The Brookes of Bridlemere that Whyte-Melville attempts to come closer to actual country life than in the other novels. Lord Waywarden, neighbor of the Brookes, is an aristocrat-farmer.[14] "There is no class that combines so much of manliness with so much of refinement. Their bodies are vigorous though their minds are cultivated."[15] (Lord Waywarden's vigor is given dramatic embodiment only on the hunting field; the cultivation of his mind remains undramatized.) Old Brooke himself, although chair-ridden during the story, is described as a member of the old-fashioned squire-archy. He

> had been a stalwart, well-grown man, in his prime--could cheer his hounds and ride his horses with unfailing lungs and vigorous dexterity. There were old women about the place now, still hale and hearty, who remembered "his eyes as bright as diamonds, bless you! and his hair as black as your hat. Such a hearty, well-limbed man as our squire was, and a free gentleman, too; with a word for everybody--gentle and simple, rich and poor"; whilst an old-fashioned attorney in Middlesworth,

> with a red nose and white neckcloth quoted Squire Brooke, as "the best judge of port wine in the country; but a careful man of his health, always, and an abstemious, never taking more than his one bottle a day!" He had been a good shot, of course; an active, but somewhat pig-headed magistrate, and an invaluable auxiliary at all agricultural dinners, cattle-shows, and such public gatherings of the landed interest and its supporters.[16]

At the time of the story, the managing of the estate has fallen on the shoulders of the older son Jack Brooke, and the burden of keeping house on those of Helen, both of whom have difficulty keeping things going against the irascible crochets of the old squire and the irresponsibilities of the younger brother, Walter Brooke.

The picture of Jack is the nearest to a detailed portrait of the country gentleman that Whyte-Melville attempts. Jack is deliberately and favorably contrasted with his brother Walter, the officer and dandy. Abrupt, hesitant, quiet, deeper than his brother, he patiently accepts the responsibilities of the estate. But although unable to compete with the dandies on the ballroom floor, he can hold his own as a sportsman.

> In the sport par excellence, the spirit stirring, the joyous, the unrivalled, the very thought of which recalls a golden vision of those mild November mornings, with their dewy pastures, their fragrant copses, and their deep, still woddlands, faintly blushing yet from autumn's farewell kiss; of manly cheer, and kindly greeting, and white and scarlet, and tramp of hoof and ring of bridle; of the horse's generous daring, and the dash and mettle of the hound; of the heart-beating moments ere suspense thrills into certainty; of the maddening rally for a

> start, and the quieter, steadier, more continuous energy of the chase--in the sport of sports, I say, no man was a deeper proficient than Jack Brooke.[17]

Jack's noble self-effacement and sacrifice for the well-being of the family does not hide his virtues from the Lady Julia, nor is he skillful enough to hide his own devotion to that bright being from her own eyes. Long before Jack has evidence for hope, Lady Julia has made her own mind up about the outcome of their acquaintanceship.

All these sketches are incidental in the novels, and the country life actually portrayed is the society villa life--this is true even when the squire is Uncle John; and the squires who are made central characters of the story are fashionable men of the world, like Vandeleur and Sir Henry Hallaton and John Roy, though the last-named, unlike Vandeleur and Hallaton, is not a philanderer. The cumulative picture is one of decay and financial ruin and of men who have little inclinations to match strength with the growing threat of industrialism and the withdrawal of political favor from the landed class. This picture begins with Sir Peregrine Grand and Sir Harry Beverly of the early novels, is continued in Brroke and in Sir Henry Hallaton of Contraband.

But the problem of the squire never comes fully into focus, and the interaction of personal character with external forces is not clearly pictured. The world of the country squire like the world of trade and commerce and

the world of the great aristocracy are outside the narrowly defined limits of the life to which the novelist restricts himself.

## Section (3) The Country House Party

A novel by Whyte-Melville usually includes at least one house party, a sequence of scenes at a country house, during which friends and acquaintances from the city arrive and depart on slight pretext and country neighbors--usually a source of amusement--visit.[18] The dinner, usually with fashionable Londoners present but often with an increment of country neighbors, the evening in the drawing room, and attendant card-playing, music,[19] and flirtation (terrace, billiard room, and conservatory provide convenient extensions of the drawing room), and the fox hunt are the three chief scenes which are repeated over and over.[20] A few additional events, particularly the provincial ball[21] and the provincial steeplechase (with gentleman or officer riders), punctuate the round of activity.[22] The reader frequently visits the quarters of young officers stationed nearby, but is aware of surrounding country life (the clergyman and his work, the small landowner, the poor of the parish) only when it comes to the country house in the person of visitors or when it is seen during occasional trips or during hunting scenes.

Life is more relaxed, more free than in the city house; as Kate Coventry remarks, there is a code of conduct for young women less strict than in the city.[23] Annie Dennison can spend hours alone with Percy Mortimer, nursing him and keeping him company after an accident during a hunt, and Laura Blair can arrange an intimate game of billiards for two with Horace Maxwell.[24] Young men and women with amatory inclinations must be utterly lacking in resourcefulness not to be able to manage moments alone with an ease which London never provides.[25]

Tilbury Nogo records a representative scene, a dinner at Squire Topthorne's after a day of hunting. The men, after the ladies have left, have indulged in several toasts to the day's hunt and to future hunting, ending in a burst of shouting "which startles the ladies in the drawing-room," where the men shortly join them, gliding in stealthily. There "the ladies are assembled over their tea and needlework, seasoned by that mysterious conversation which none of the male sex has ever yet been known to overhear." "Is there an instance on record of the earliest arrival from the dining-room ever yet finding the graceful bevy otherwise than sunk in profound silence, and apparently each totally absorbed in her own tea, her own embroidery, or her own thoughts?"[26]

> Tea succeeds coffee, and music follows the departure of tea. There is shilling whist for those who like it; and the click of billiard-balls from the adjoining room announces that well-lighted apartment to have

> its share of occupants. A snug flirtation is going on at the pianoforte, between a bachelor squire--at this period of the evening sufficiently malleable--and not very juvenile young lady, in a most Parisian _toilette_, and with her hair very nicely done. The softening squire leans over her music-book, but what he says is completely drowned to other ears by the swelling _refrain_ of the "Marche des Croates," which, as I happen to admire the air, I know she has played at least five times over. Probably, like many other of those _tete-a-tetes_, which the world calls flirtations, if we could overhear their conversation, we should find it was quite as uninteresting as that of old Mrs. Shaftoe and her neighbour--a bland, pleasant-looking matron--on the sofa, who are deep in the merits of the latter's youngest grandchild, and the defects, culinary and otherwise, of a certain kitchen-maid, who came to her from Castle Bowshot. Everyone is occupied, and Mrs. Montague only is alone. I drop into a vacant chair by her side; and, whilst the Croatian March keeps grinding on at the pianoforte, and the old ladies at my elbow ring the changes upon measles, whooping cough, and board-wages, I spend another evening of delicious enjoyment, that sends me to bed once more, asking myself, as I wind up my watch, "How is this to end?"[27]

_Uncle John_ provides the most brilliant and varied group for the house party scene, lacking only the middle-aged philanderer (like Sir Henry Hallaton of _Contraband_ or Lord St. Moritz of _Black but Comely_): the Squire himself and his termagant wife (Uncle John and Aunt Emily); the military (Nokes and Stokes, two young officers from the barracks nearby, and Young Perigord, a cornet just out of Eton, and Major-General Pike, an old veteran); a world traveler (Percy Mortimer), a young dandy from the Foreign Office (Horace Maxwell); the neighboring clergyman (the serious Algernon Lexley); and the center of attention, two young women, the healthy, wholesome ingenue (Annie Dennison) and the beautiful adventuress (Laura Blair). It is during

this house party that Laura, ready to accept the Rev. Algernon Lexley but unwilling to let young Horace Maxwell escape without a final struggle, plays a double game in the billiard room. Horace out of pique proposes a game of billiards (Annie has been paying more attention to Percy Mortimer than Horace likes). Laura is not very expert with the cue, and Horace's mind is on the girl in the next room. Laura opens with the information that Mr. Lexley is going to be married. In a frank and hearty tone Horace indicates his sentiment by wishing Lexley joy.

> "And won't you wish me joy, Mr. Maxwell?" she asked, making an egregious miss that left a powdering of chalk on the cloth. "Am I to count for nothing in an arrangement which, at least, could not well take place without my consent?"

"With the readiness of a man of the world towards a woman whom he does not love," Horace recovers his manners, flattering her with the comment that congratulations would be superfluous, for she could marry anybody she chose.

> She swept him a scornful curtsey, passing round the table for her next stroke, and though she looked very proud and handsome whilst she played it, Horace could not repress a little shudder of commiseration, and a hope that his friend Lexley had not got a handful.

As Horace continues his play imperturbably, disturbed only by thought of Annie, Laura continues her losing game. She times her remarks to Horace's most difficult shots; during one he is "sprawling over the table for a lozing hazard" but "not a quiver of lip or eyelid betrayed the slightest emotion, nor did his cue deviate one hair's-breadth from its

aim." One more question and then she plays her last card, "quietly and deliberately, like a true gambler." "Bending over that table to hide a blush" she asks him whether, if he were to propose, he would have courage to begin himself or the lady would have to tell it herself in so many words.

> Even now he could not, or would not, understand. Her whole future as a clergyman's wife seemed to shape itself definitely, while he struck the butt-end of his cue on the floor, and exclaimed, in that frank tone of friendship no woman ever mistakes for love--

"Miss Blair, you're a witch! You have found me out, I do believe." Horace is about to relieve himself of his secret, when Annie herself appears at the door, then misinterpreting the last remark Horace has made to Laura, excuses herself.

> "Don't go, Miss Dennison," gasped Horace, wishing his handsome antagonist at the bottom of the sea.
>
> But Annie was hurt and implacable. "I hate being in the way," said she with a little forced laugh and a quiver of her lip. "I don't care much for billiards myself. Please go on and don't mind me."
>
> But Miss Blair was already in the drawing-room. "I shall not play any more," said she, passing haughtily through the doorway. "Mr. Maxwell has beaten me a love-game."28

Footnotes CHAPTER XIII.

1. For a description of the difference between the country squire and the great landed gentry, see Rosa, work cited, p. 35. On the structure of the English country life a century ago, see Watson, work cited, pp. 86 ff; also Fortescue, work cited. For comment on the power of the squires "even" in the period 1825-1850, see Darton, p. 14, and Apsley, work cited. For a contemporary account, see Henry Kingsley, Ravenshoe, Chap. xxvi, on the effect upon the countryside when the old squire dies.

2. Contrast Smedley, Harry Coverdale's Courtship, Chap. xxiii. Smedley inclines to the old-fashioned country squire, a staunch Tory in politics and locally an irascible tyrant. Whyte-Melville's squires are more like those in the novels of John Mills.

3. Silcote of Silcotes, Chap. xlii. Among the aspects of country life which appear in this novel and in others like Mills' English Fireside, Smedley's Lewis Arundel, is the skirmish with the poachers. Whyte-Melville does not deal with this at all.

4. Galsworthy in The Island Pharisees, Chap. ii, speaks of country house life in terms of "cub-hunting, theatricals, and distant sounds of practiced music." Whyte-Melville spares the reader the theatricals (contrast Smart's Breezie Langton).

5. For a description of Squire Haycock, see Kate Coventry, p. 86.

6. Tilbury Nogo, p. 267.

7. The same place.

8. The same work, p. 354. (Jack Topthorne is a bachelor. Smedley in Harry Coverdale's Courtship, Chap. xxiii, gives a description of the married version in Mrs. Blusterton's account of her sporting husband: "Out all day from the first of September till the breeding season comes round again--then the moment they've finished dinner and their bottle of port-wine--asleep they go and only wake up to stamp and swear with the cramp and drop off again, till upstairs to bed.")

9. The same work, pp. 290 ff.

10. The same work, pp. 391 ff. (Chaps. x-xi).

Footnotes Chapter XIII (Continued)

11. The same work, p. 389. For a gallery of rural characters see the novels of Charles Kingsley.

12. Uncle John, p. 129.

13. The same, p. 124. For another picture of the squire's room, see The Interpreter, p. 60.

14. The title character in General Bounce is a gentleman-farmer, but his farming is an avocation for the years of retirement. In Cerise, Whyte-Melville gives a brief picture of an Eighteenth Century squire and justice of the peace, Sir Marmaduke.

15. The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 59.

16. The same, p. 35.

17. The same, p. 77. See also the description of Jack, below, Chap. xiii, Sec. 2.

18. The opening chapters of Uncle John are particularly convenient as an example, but almost any novel includes some such sequence. The picture in Kate Coventry, with the leering, coarse Sir Guy Scapegrace and his special room in the parish church from which he can look down to watch the service while sitting comfortably is one of the most interesting and detailed.

19. Although Miss Merlin, Ada Latimer, Jin Ross (Contraband, p. 59), Blanche Douglas (Satanella, p. 11), Laura Blair (Uncle John, p. 66) and Jane Lee (Black but Comely, Chap. xxxv) are all talented in voice or at the piano, not all the girls who use the keyboard as a means of flirtation are so. In Good for Nothing, Blanche Bullingdon sets her cap at Gordon and plays "accurately, conscientiously, in excellent time, and without a particle of feeling." See also the scene in Tilbury Nogo, p. 187.

20. Annie Dennison in Uncle John, p. 349, mentions private theatricals among the frivolities which she is going to give up, but Whyte-Melville does not include any scenes of theatricals or parlor games in the novels.

21. See above, Chap. x, Note 30.

22. Occasionally there is a visit to the houses of the great. In the early novels there are two archery

meets (Tilbury Nogo, Chap. xiv, and The White Rose, Chap. xi). But archery was apparently replaced by tennis.

23. Kate Coventry, p. 271.

24. Both in Uncle John.

25. Walter Brooke's proposal to Lady Julia (see above, Chap. xi, Sec. 4), for example, occurs in the conservatory, as do the scenes between Lord Fitzowen and Nell Roy in Roy's Wife.

26. Tilbury Nogo, pp. 278-9. The further comment is characteristic of Whyte-Melville's essay-like reflections.

27. The same, pp. 289-290. For another dinner, see the discussion of Roy's Wife, below, Chap. xv, Sec. 5. The most detailed dinner scenes are these two and those in Kate Coventry, pp. 118 ff., Market Harborough, Chaps. xx-xxi, and The Brookes of Bridlemere, pp. 208 ff. in which the Rev. Mr. Silas Tregarthen and his wife have to swallow their moral disapproval and submit to Bel's brilliance of company. The fashionable Lady Horsingham in Kate Coventry, p. 118, entertains once a month "astonishing the neighbors as much with her London dresses as did Cousin Amelia with her London manners."

28. Uncle John, p. 150.

# CHAPTER XIV

## Hunting and Racing

### Section (1) The Joys of the Chase

Though hunting is only one element in the novels of Whyte-Melville,[1] to many readers, particularly the men, it was an important one. A hunting man himself, secretary of the Pytchley Hunt for several years, Whyte-Melville must have been known in person to many of his sporting readers, and the authenticity of his passages about the hunt--no less authentic in the eyes of hunting men themselves, one supposes, because they cast a romantic glow over the hunting field--must have contributed to his reputation. The importance of such an authenticity to a large section of the British reading public can best be indicated by such expressions of sentiment as the following, both drawn from Sir Charles Frederick's Fox Hunting.[2] Pennell-Elmhirst, a sporting journalist, was considered to be Whyte-Melville's successor.[3] (The close relationship between the hunting scenes of Whyte-Melville's novels and contemporary sporting journalism is indicated by the fact that Pennell-Elmhirst was not a novelist at all.)

> Speaking of champagne, he /Elmhirst/ told me once that never in his life, so far as he could remember, had he opened a bottle of it without drinking the toast of fox-hunting. What would we give, every one of us, if we could make the same boast. . . .Infirmity kept him

> from the hunting field at the last, and when he could not go out hunting life for him held nothing more.[4]

Such a sentiment was given clerical sanction. Dr. Norman Lang, Archdeacon of Northamptonshire (an important hunting country and scene of Whyte-Melville's Holmby House), and brother of the Archbishop of Canterbury) in a public speech at the dedication of a memorial in a parish churchyard indicated the sentimental ties by which many connected "hunting" and "England":

> referring to fox-hunting, he observed that it was a priceless heritage of English life, and one felt always that if in the course of economic change there was any threat of the extinction of that life and service it would be a bad thing for England and the Empire.[5]

Kate Coventry extolls the joys of the chase and speaks of "that joyous excitement for which some men are content to live, and even in a few sad cases to die,"[6] and Whyte-Melville himself said that he lived for two things, the pen and the pigskin[7] (and Whyte-Melville died on the hunting field). The novels are filled with praise of the joys of the hunt.[8]

## Section (2) The History of Fox-Hunting

This national sport in the form described in Whyte-Melville's novels was a relatively new development,[9] dating back when Whyte-Melville began to write, only fifty years.[10] During the eighteenth century, the fox was hunted

as a "vermin" to be exterminated, although a few sporting practices, such as forcing the fox out in order to make a "run", were established, and kennels of fox-hounds were kept. Enclosure of the English country-side changed fox-hunting radically (as did the introduction later, particularly after the Boer War, of barbed wire). The enclosures made frequent jumps necessary, and about 1780 the jump at a gallop instead of from a standstill was introduced. The increase in the hazards and speed of fox-hunting increased its possibilities as an adventurous sport. About this time one enthusiast (Hugo Meynell) established the subscription pack and bred hounds for speed. (Horses were bred more and more for speed, a fact which by the middle of the century changed the appearance of the hunter usually ridden in the fast hunting countries.) It was also at this time that the practice of "preserving" foxes was introduced, and the farmer became an ally or enemy accordingly as he cooperated or not, though obviously when the squire himself was an ardent sportsman[11] the farmer seldom refused. The "vermin" had become a "beast of venerie." The change is evident in the difference between the famed Billesdon Coplow run of 1800 (twenty-eight miles at twelve miles an hour) and the Charlton run of 1739 (twenty-four miles at two and one-half miles an hour). Sportsmen hunting the fox could now speak of "a quick thing" across country. The full development of the hunting season did not come until the turn of the [illegible], although a few [illegible] in order to make a [illegible] and [illegible] instead of [illegible] in the [illegible]

[illegible] the difference between [illegible] (twenty-eight miles [illegible] miles an hour) [illegible] century. Fox-hunting had been the pursuit chiefly of country squires and land owners. (In literature the Squire Westerns and Tony Lumpkins). Now two groups from the town became interested: the newly rich (the predecessors of Surtees' Jorrocks, a grocer whom one writer describes as the "cockney in search of adventure") and the young rips of the Regency (the predecessors of Whyte-Melville's officers and dandies). In addition, the division of the country-side into districts or "countries" provided convenient gathering points, many of them within easy reach of London. (By 1806 Leicestershire, especially Melton Mowbray, was already preeminent as the center of fashionable hunting and maintained its place throughout the century.)[12] Improvement in transportation facilitated the new interest in the sport, and eventually the coming of the railroads ended completely the old scheme.

The newcomers, at the turn of the century, made a rough and reckless, even brutal, sport out of the hunt, particularly the young bucks of the Regency, the "Corinthians." This changed with the end of the Regency, and the change in moral tone in the early victorian society. But improvement in tone began particularly with the return from the Napoleonic Wars of the young officers.[13] The participation of the Duke himself is supposed to have been of considerable influence. Gradually hunting became a sport for gentlemen. It is this reformed and relatively

decorous sport that Whyte-Melville records in his novels and which, in turn, his novels may have influenced.[14]

Hunting became a sport for gentlemen. It became also, though not as rapidly, a sport for gentlewomen too. For some time women simply rode to the meet, properly escorted, to see the fox get away. Or they attended in carriage and followed at a distance. A few actually hunted, but the reaction from Regency freedom and license delayed more general participation.[15] The great rush of gentlewomen to the hunting field began in 1878 (almost precisely at the end of Whyte-Melville's writing career), when the visiting Empress of Austria set the style. But by that time the more skilful and daring horsewomen had been taking part in the hunt for several years without great danger to their reputations.[16] Though Whyte-Melville himself did not share the prejudice against women who hunt[17] he felt, in his Riding Recollections, that special counsel was necessary. He remarks that they possess "more pluck than nerve," and recounts an anecdote of a lady who directed her rescuers as she lay pinned down by a horse's full weight on her legs, her head between the horse's forelegs. The difficulties of the side-saddle are comprehended only by the man who has tried one and make the feminine desire to excel even more admirable. (He lists, here, other sports in which women excel, telling of a woman swimming alone in the Channel more than half a mile off

shore, of women gliding and turning more deftly in the new universal rinks than the men, "of seductive hoydens" offering the winning service at lawn-tennis, of women taking the heaviest fish with a rod and line and killing grouse left and right.)[18] But he thinks that "in these days ladies who go out hunting ride a turn too hard." Denying any protest "against their jumping" he would not "relegate them to the bridle-roads or lanes."[19] But even if they disdain to follow a regular pilot, he entreats them "not to try 'cutting out the work,' as it is called, but rather to wait and see one rider, at least, over a leap before they attempt it themselves."[20] ("It turns one sick to think of her dainty head between a horse's hind legs, or of those cruel pommels bruising her delicate ribs and bosom.")[21]

## Section (3) Whyte-Melville on Hunting

Whyte-Melville records many of these changes in his novels.[22] In Market Harborough, for example, the change of the composition of the hunting field, where he deprecates the invasion of the hunting field by men who do not have the time to be single-minded about their sport.

> There are few specimens left of the old hunting sort, who devoted themselves exclusively to their favourite pursuit, and could not even bear to hear it mentioned with anything like levity or disrespect; men whose only claim to social distinction was that they hunted, who looked upon their red coat as passport to all the society they cared to have, and who divided the whole community, in their own minds, into two classes--"men

who hunt" and "men who don't."[23]

He goes on to describe the variety of people who now are among the first flight with a crack pack of hounds, composing a list much like that which he gives much later in Satanella when a party leaves London on a foggy November morning from Eustace station in a large saloon-carriage, for a hunt with the Queen's hounds. "Booted and spurred for the chase" were "soldiers, sailors, diplomatists, bankers, lawyers, artists, authors, men of pleasure, and men of business."[24] In Market Harborough he speaks of this increase of half-devoted sportsmen as an indication that hunting is going downhill.[25] This is evidently a sober revision of the more sanguine comment earlier in Tilbury Nogo where he pointed to this increase in numbers as an indication that hunting "far from being on the wane, as those who bewail the absence of young ones coming on would fain lead us to suppose--is becoming year by year, a more popular amusement."[26] Even then he is concerned about the increase in numbers as a detriment to sport and as a danger to forward riders and tail hounds. In Inside the Bar he comments in greater detail on the changes in hunting.

> People talk about hunting going out; being on its last legs; civilized away before the advance of railroads, the march of intellect, etc. All this is sheer nonsense. There are more men hunting /sic; who hunt?/ today than hunted twenty years ago, twice as many as hunted fifty years ago. Hounds run harder than they did in the time of our fathers; horses are better bred, better kept, better bridled, and better ridden. The country is also more enclosed, and there is consequently a deal more jumping, and more occasion for

> skill and quickness, than when High Leicestershire was an open upland, and Naseby Field an unfenced marsh. The best of the old ones could not have gone "a cracker" in higher form than the dozen or so of men who may be seen any morning in the week with any of our crack packs of hounds in a quick thing; and in the "days of Old Meynell" there was a good deal more room for those who liked to try. It really is by no means an easy matter to thread a crowd of a hundred horsemen in a narrow lane, all going racing pace, and then to jockey the best ten or a dozen of these for the easiest place in the first fence. The actual feat of keeping near hounds when they run hard requires skill and quickness; but the difficulty is much enhanced when it has to be performed by a score of men where there is only comfortable space for five. It is a pleasant sensation, too, when the first impediment has been disposed of, and a man feels what the fast ones of the present day call "landed," to sail away with the hounds, always supposing he is riding a hunter, and to feel that he will not now be interfered with till they check, but can do his own places at his own pace, without pulling his horse out of his stride, and gain all the advantages of seeing the hounds turn, while he has all the pleasure of watching them as they shoot across the field in swift, streaming line.[27]

In another, less lively passage, in Riding Recollections, Whyte-Melville amplifies this description in an explanation of the reason why the sporting prints of his grandfathers and great-grandfathers show horsemen who could handle their horses with only a plain snaffle bridle. Even then the midland counties were only partially enclosed, and "the high thorn hedges that now call forth so much bold and timid riding" either did not exist or were of tender growth. "The surface, too, was undrained, and a few furlongs brings the hardest puller to reason when he goes in over his fetlocks every stride." As roads and coaches improved, the number of horsemen multiplied and "second horses" were introduced, and the "crowd became a recognized impediment."[28]

> Meantime fences were growing in height and thickness; an improved system of farming sub-divided the fields and partitioned them off for pastoral or agricultural purposes; the hunter was called upon to collect himself, and jump at short notice, with a frequency that roused his mettle to the utmost, and this, too, in a rush of his fellow-creatures, urging, jostling, crossing him in the first five minutes at every turn.[29]

Although Market Harborough is the only novel, except perhaps for Tilbury Nogo, which can be called a hunting novel, few of the others, even the historical novels, lack either a hunting or a racing scene, and in those few which do, there are echoes of the field and the race-course in the thought and talk of at least a few characters.[30] The "provinces" and the "shires" receive nearly equal justice. Fox-hunting is the principal subject, but hunting the carted deer with the Queen's Buck Hounds is frequently recounted[31] (apparently, too, was particularly fashionable for the horsewomen of the sixties and seventies). In one novel there is a hunt of the stag in Exmoor, in another echoes at least of the rougher hunting in the Irish counties, and in another boar hunting in the Hungarian mountains. Even the historical novels include such scenes, five of them opening with hunting scenes (or including hunting scenes within the early pages), one a run with the Pytchley Hunt before turning back in time to the Seventeenth Century, another the hunting of lions in the African desert, and three others the royal stag hunt of the French court. Horse-racing is nearly as prominent[32] (in this Whyte-Melville differs sharply from Surtees); Ascot, Epsom and the Derby, Goodwood,

Newmarket, and the steeplechases of the provinces as well, usually the military steeplechase with officer-riders or the civilian steeplechase with "gentleman riders." If one addes to the hunting scenes and the racing scenes, the many country house scenes in which the characters appear on horseback, and London scenes of the dandies and horsewomen in Rotten Row and the Park and of dandies' driving four-in-hands,[33] and, in the historical novels, scenes of escape and pursuit, one may not be accurate in describing Whyte-Melville as the novelist of the hunt, but certainly would be justified in speaking of him as the novelist of horsemen and horsewomen. Many of his characters are fully themselves, even when it comes to love-making, only on horseback, and the conduct of men and women on horseback, as is made clear in the passage describing Dandy Burton in The White Rose,[34] is indicative of their character.

To the people of Whyte-Melville's novels the hunt is an end in itself, and it is the personal drama of the hunt which the novelist records. Only occasionally does he leave this drama to describe the members of the field as "characters" separate from the run itself, and then usually during the leisurely gathering at the meet after the ride to covert or during the ride home. (Inside the Bar is the most elaborate set of "character sketches" comparable to the volumes by Surtees and Trollope.) So to describe the hunting scenes of Whyte-Melville is to speak of horsemen

in action: riding to the covert; gathering at the meet and waiting for the hounds and huntsman; sizing up the newcomers and new mounts; taking position near the covert where the fox will break; getting away at the find, sometimes in a rush, sometimes by luck of position ahead of the field, sometimes hopelessly behind; settling down to a straight run; crowding through the gate or halted by the locked gate; finding the right spot at which to take the fence if no gate is near, or misjudging through overconfidence, or halting entirely in indecision; jumping the fence, or the bullfinch,[35] with its ditch on one side and its brush on the other (often a double fence); clearing the fence, or breaking through the upper rails still on the horse or, perhaps, spilled from the saddle; taking the water jump[36] or finding a bridge or a ford, just reaching the crumbling bank on the other side perhaps and either slipping back for a ducking or recovering for the run; slowing down in ploughed or undrained fields, or hazarding a spill from the covered drain of the dry field;[37] pressing and exhausting the horse (shifting then to the second horse ridden by the "boy," or dropping out of the hunt) or warily using lanes and roads when the line of the fox can be anticipated and short cuts taken (and perhaps getting cut off from the hunt in an endless maze of fences); getting a respite for the horse as the hounds check; losing position or gaining it on the field when the

fox doubles back; riding to be in finally at the kill, or coming up soon enough to pass among the late ones as a flyer; joining on the way back the triumphant horsemen who stayed all the way, or riding back alone to avoid exposing the exhaustion of the horse--all this at high speed, sometimes alone leading the field, sometimes in the crowd and rush jostled and jostling at gates and fences.[38]

## Section (4) Market Harborough

Market Harborough (with Inside the Bar which has been printed with it since its fourth edition) is easily the novel which most deserves to have a permanent reading public among those who travel minor Victorian paths. (That it is his best is a judgment which no reader of Whyte-Melville's novels has disputed,[39] although the extent to which it does not represent Whyte-Melville's works is not usually pointed out.)[40] For its own time it was shrewdly conceived, for it could appeal to two different groups, the fashionable Leicestershire fox-hunters, and the anti-Leicestershire sportsmen. For despite its central position in the English hunting scenes, Leicestershire was not wholly an object of envy. Some hardy sportsmen looked with contempt upon the soft and easy riding over grass lands and upon the dandified group who frequented the Leicestershire hunts,[41] Northamptonshire,[42] and other

"flying counties."[43] For these, Mr. Sawyer, who comes from the provinces and preserves a sturdy John Bull independence in the face of Leicestershire dandyism (it is a woman and not the Leicestershire manners that has the greatest effect on him); for the others, the languid Honble. Crasher, a distillation of imperturbability, but not a ladies' man.[44] Though antithetical types, Mr. Sawyer and the Honble. Crasher are fast friends.

The hunting habits of the Honble. Crasher have been described already.[45] The sagacious Mr. Sawyer brings a full competitive spirit to the hunting runs, and without direct dishonesty is not averse to any maneuver which will save him or his horse (or disguise a weakness of his mount or a mishap of the rider) in competition with younger and more experienced men. But he lacks nothing in courage, or in zest for the fast run, and can go a good one if need be with the young dandies who affect an insoucieance and reckless ease foreign to Mr. Sawyer's character.

(Mr. Sawyer, riding Marathon "to sell" and having no desire to be out on front with him is caught when the fox doubles back. He has no choice but to "cut in and go to work at once."

> Taking him in a grasp that would have lifted a ton, Mr. Sawyer drove his spurs into the half-bred brute, and set him going close to the hounds at the best pace he could command. For a short distance, and when held well together Marathon could stride away with very imposing form. The sensation of having a

lead is, in itself, provocative of emulation; behind our friend were four or five intimate companions, who were not likely to let him hear the last of any instance of shirking that should come under their notice. Close on their track were the flower of Leicestershire; and these again were succeeded, so to speak, by a whole army of camp-followers, "maddening in the rear." Had the Styx been in front of him, he must have charged it--in or over.

Instead of the water of Acheron, however, there was nothing more formidable in his line than a straggling, overgrown bullfinch at the far end of the field; just such a fence, indeed, as Marathon was in the habit of declining, but yet which he hoped the turmoil behind, the general excitement, and the persuasive powers of his own spurs, would enable him to incude his horse to face. He had plenty of time to scan it as he approached. Half a mile or so of ridge and furrow, even at a hunter's best pace, gives leisure for consideration. Ere the hounds had strung it in single file, he was aware of a wide ditch to him; on the farther side was obviously a grass-field, *and*--an uncertainty.

Marking with his eye the weakest place, through which, nevertheless, he could not see daylight, Mr. Sawyer crammed his hat on his head, and set his horse resolutely at the fence; Marathon, according to custom, when he expected anything out of the common, shutting up every stride he went. Had it not been rather downhill, even his master's consummate horsemanship would have failed to bring him close to it. The fall of the ground, however, and the pace he was going, forbade the bay to stop. *CRASH*! he plunged into the very middle of the fence--broke through it from sheer velocity, to jerk both knees against a strong oak rail beyond--blundered on to his nose over that--slid half a dozen yards on his head--nearly recovered himself--stumbled once more, and finally got up again, with his curb-rein turned over his ears; the rider's feet out of both stirrups, hat off, a contusion on his left eyebrow, and the horse's nostrils full of mud, but *no fall*!

"By the powers, that's a rum one!" said Mr. Sawyer, as he cantered slowly up the opposite slope, repairing damages the while, and turned round to see the first flight charge the obstacle, which had so nearly disposed of his own chance.

> Lusty as eagles, ravenous as wolves, jealous as girls, down came the four gluttons at the fence, each man having chosen his own place, and scorning to deviate one hair's-breadth from his line. None, however, had made so judicious a selection as Mr. Sawyer. The rail, which had so nearly discomfited the latter, would neither bend nor break, but he had the luck of getting it where it was lowest and nearest to the fence; everywhere else it was not only high, but stood out a horse's length into the field, just the place which must catch the cleverest hunter in the world, if ridden to do it all in his stride.
>
> The scene that met Mr. Sawyer's eyes was amusing, though alarming. Four imperial crowners at one and the same instant--four loose horses galloping wildly away--four red coats rising simultaneously from Mother Earth--eight top-booted legs shuffling in ridiculous haste after the departing steeds.[46]

## Section (5) Other Horsemen

Like the Crasher's languid horsemanship, the style of Walter Brooke in The Brookes of Bridlemere is that of the dandy and in sharp contrast to the solid determination of Mr. Sawyer. (Walter's horsemanship is the one item to his account unless his amiability, which removes his dishonesty from the category of the intentionally vicious is another.) The scene in which Walter's riding is shown at best advantage combines two favorite hunting incidents of Whyte-Melville's novels, the water-jump and the fall in the covered drain.

> /Lord/ Mexico, watching him /Fugleman, the horse/ sailing away at his ease, ridden fairly, though liberally, handled with consummate skill at his fences, and crossing them without exertion, as though an unseen hand lifted him and set him down again

> seven or eight yards farther on, was quite determined to possess so good a horse, and would have offered the money then and there--if he could have caught him! Of such an event there seemed but little chance for another five-and-thirty minutes or so. As he jumped a high flight of rails into the field through which the brook ran, Fugleman was alongside the body of the hounds, and fifty yards ahead of the duke himself.[47]

Only Walter and the Duke attempt to jump the river, which is swelled by late rains, the others being content to find a ford at the cost of falling behind the hounds. But Walter "means to have it." Lord Waywarden, watching, believes no hunter in England can make it.

> They saw Walter diverging a little from the line he had hitherto taken. It was obvious that he had marked with his eye the spot at which he meant to try and compass the brook. He leapt Fugleman over the last fence at an awkward place under a tree, but thus obtained a fair, sound headland, with a fall of the ground in his favour leading straight away to the water's edge. It was the masterly manner in which he gradually increased his horse's pace down this incline that elicited Lady Julia's approbation. Fugleman's ears were pointed and his head up; the wild blood of old Frantic, inherited through Fenella, was boiling in his veins.[48]

Julia and her father still dispute whether he will make it. As she spoke, Fugleman "landed safely on the farther bank; made a false step, a short stride, recovered himself, and was away at his long, easy gallop after the hounds once more."[49] But in the next field Fugleman steps into a drain and breaks his back, and Walter loses his one certain source of income. Walter, however, as a dandy and officer, preserves his calm when Lord Waywarden and Julia ride up.

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> The dandy had by this time recovered his habitual self-possession. He pulled an embroidered case from his pocket, and proceeded to select a cigar with great deliberation, observing coolly--
>
> "The fool had the whole of a fifty-acre field to put his hindlegs wherever he liked, and he must needs leave them in a place not a foot wide. Well, there's and end of him! It's lucky the days are long. I've a goodish walk from here to St. Barbs."
>
> Lady Julia flashed at him a look of indignation that seemed to dry the very tears standing on her cheek.[50]

Spills and mishaps are frequent in the Whyte-Melville runs, and Lord Willoughby de Broke charges him with making riding to the hounds "a much more desperate and blood-curdling affair than it really is. He deals in wet and dirt and tired horses and crashing falls, and gigantic fences, and bottomless brooks."[51] Broken collar bones are the most frequent injury. Most of the serious accidents in the novels come from the misstep of a horse into a narrow and deep covered-drain: Mr. Softly's accident in Inside the Bar, which lays him up in the inn (he believes the covered drain is the only one in the country); Walter Brooke's loss of Fugleman on whose speed he was counting for a recouping of his losses at gambling; Satanella's fatal accident in which both rider and mount are killed. (Tilbury Nogo the blunderer did not need anything so out of the way and broke his collar bone at a fence. Percy Mortimer, whose convalescense in Uncle John provides opportunity for a flirtation, was ignominiously kicked while holding a horse

which had just thrown his friend.) If to these accidents are added all the spills in the novels (even Kate Coventry is not exempt and takes a nasty one although her chief injury is to her pride--"before all those men"), hunting was a hazardous sport, and the criticism of Lord Willoughby may be justified. Yet Whyte-Melville himself was killed by a fall during a hunt, and one of the notices of his death mentions other recent deaths of distinguished horsemen.[52]

One noticeable fact about the novels is the absence of colorful or vigorous figurative language drawn from the hunt. The few figures of speech of this sort which do appear are unimaginative comparisons of women with horses.[53] "Just as a hunting man, sooner or later, is pretty sure to be laid up with a broken collar-bone, so in the career of life must be encountered that inevitable disaster which results in a wounded spirit and a sore heart."[54] Or

> I once heard a man affirm that for him there was in every horse's face the beauty each of us sees in the one woman he adores. This outrageous position he assumed after a good run, and, indeed, after the dinner which succeeded it. I will not go quite so far as to agree with him, but I will say that in generosity, temper, and fidelity, there is many a woman, and man too, who might well take example from the noble qualities of the horse.[55]

Or, speaking of the burdens women bear:

> I only know that the quiet courage, the generous spirit, the untiring endurance with which they

> perform the journey of life is too generally ignored, unappreciated, and thrown away. How often have we not seen a thorough-bred horse ridden by a butcher--a being little lower than an angel submitting, gentle and patient, to a creature little higher than a brute?[56]

This particular simile is probably unavoidable,[57] but Whyte-Melville hardly uses another. It is the writer whose writings were too vulgar and coarse to appeal to gentleman riders,[58] who came to be quoted more and more often as the century wore on.[59] (One writer about Whyte-Melville comments on the anomaly of "incessant study and triumphant quotation" of Surtees by young bloods of today whose humor has swung to the extreme of cold-blooded understatement."[60]) Sassoon in his Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man has George Sherston as a boy speak a language with his friend which consists of phrases culled from Surtees' novels.[61] Charles Kingsley, who found Surtees wilfully vulgar, himself used hunting figures more naturally and vividly than Whyte-Melville.[62]

## Section (6) The Race Track

Scenes at race tracks, both at the fashionable races--where the people of the novel gather for excitement, young dandies ruin themselves by reckless betting, and young women continue their flirtatious maneuvers--and at the steeplechases and handicap races in the provinces, in which young dandies and officers participate, are nearly

as frequent as hunting scenes.[63] Although the novelist spends care upon description of beautiful horses and skilful horsemanship, the more restricted pattern of such events does not allow him opportunity for the exhilarating personal incident which he introduces into his descriptions of the hunt, and the racing scenes are scenes of fashionable life as much as they are scenes of sport. The pattern of the events in which the characters of the story participate is a stereotyped one: a young officer rides his own horse or the horse of a friend (often in a desperate attempt to recoup his personal fortunes), rides an exciting and expert race, but comes in a close second[64] to an experienced gentleman-rider, usually one who makes a business of going from steeplechase to steeplechase (or handicap as it may be). Often it is an accident[65] at the last barrier which defeats the rider. Unlike Henry Hawley Smart, Whyte-Melville does not achieve cumulative effect by providing a long period of suspense through elaborate details concerning the preparation and training for the races (except by sharing the young gentleman's concern about his debts), nor is he interested in detail in the chicanery connected with the breeding, training, and racing of horses, as Smart was.[66] To these scenes should be added the escapes and pursuits on horseback, chiefly in the historical novels, none of which become as real as the hunting scenes.

Footnotes CHAPTER XIV

1. A fact which Saintsbury, English Novel, p. 257, emphasizes in the short but observant section devoted to Whyte-Melville's novels: "It has been said [rashly] that none but hunting men and women can read them." Saintsbury links Whyte-Melville with Lawrence and others of the period.

2. An interesting sidelight is the Englishman's carrying the hunt (or the horse race) with him to war: See Lever, Charles O'Malley, Bk. II, Chap. xxx, and Grant's One of the Six Hundred, Chap. xxix. For similar examples from World War I, see Darton's From Surtees to Sassoon, pp. 11-12.

3. See Frederick, "A Fox-Hunter's Book Shelf."

4. Frederick, work cited, p. 314.

5. The same, p. 17. See also Charles Kingsley, Yeast, Chap. ii: "I tell you, I never saw a man who could cut out his way across country who could not cut his way through better things when his turn came. The cleverest and noblest fellows are sure to be the best riders in the long run" (put in the mouth of Lancelot).

6. Kate Coventry, p. 255.

7. See also Riding Recollections, pp. 240-241: "A man who has once been fortunate enough to find himself, for ever so short a distance, leading

'The cream of the cream, in the shire of shires,'

will never, I imagine, forget his feelings of triumph and satisfaction while he occupied so proud a position; nor do I think that, as a matter of mere amusement and pleasurable excitement, life can offer anything to compare with a good horse, a good conscience, a good start, and

'A quick thirty minutes from Ranksborough Gorse.'"

8. See also above, Chap. xiii, Sec. 2, the discussion of Jack Brooke. Also General Bounce, p. 323; The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 77; Bones and I, p. 278; M. or N., pp. 7 and 136; Contraband, p. 7; Katerfelto, p. 255; and Satanella, pp. 327 and 330-331. One aspect of hunting

which Whyte-Melville does not express frequently is the common comparison of the hunting field to the battle field, although Charles Kettering in General Bounce, p. 260, thinks in terms of both interchangeably. Compare James Grant, One of the Six Hundred, Chap. xxxv: Col. Beverly speaks to his cavalry before the engagement, reminding them that "we have all been used to ride to hounds, and that is more than any of these Russian fellows have done." Also the introductory chapter to Charles Kingsley's Two Years Ago in which Calude the artist defends English sport, in conversation with an American, pointing to the record of English fighting men at Inkermmn.

9. So also was the literature of fox-hunting. Even the literature of hunting in general is relatively scarce before the Eighteenth Century, according to Lady Apsley.

10. Most of the details in the following historical sketch are from Lady Apsley's Bridleways through History, but they are commonly recorded facts in other sketches. See above, Chap. ii, note 21.

11. See Trollope's The American Senator for an interesting situation when a farmer is accused of poisoning a fox. On the other side, one of the black things to say about a squire during the century was that he did not keep his coverts up. (See Trollope's The Belton Estate).

12. Young Ritson in Lytton's Pelham says "I only hunt in Leicestershire with my friend, Lord Bobadob; 'tis not the thing to hunt anywhere else" (Chap. xl).

13. Chalmers, work cited, p. 339.

14. Lady Apsley, work cited, p. 376, speaking of the new era of fox-hunting 1820-1880 and the disappearance of the Mytton-type of fox-hunter, and his replacement by the gentleman, says that Whyte-Melville was responsible for this "more than most."

15. See also quotation from Inside the Bar above, Chap. xi, Sec. 4.

16. E. g., Kate Coventry and her successors. T. F. Dale, Fox Hunting in the Shires, quoted in Looker, work cited, mentions women of rank riding to the hounds in the 1840's.

Footnotes Chapter XIV (Continued)

17. Cp. above, Chap. xi, Sec. 3, Kate's complaint about the attitude toward women who hunt. Whyte-Melville apparently was almost alone in portraying continually women who hunt. Smedley in Harry Coverdale does not have his nice girls hunt (Alice, in fact, expects Harry to give up his hunting when he marries her /Chap. sviii/). See also his Lewis Arundel, Chap. xxiii. Surtees portrayed the coarse vulgar horsewoman, and in Analysis of the Hunting Field, Chap. xix, says that women are as much in their place at the meet as they are out of it tearing across country. In Mrs. Braddon's Lady Audley's Secret only the minor characters ride (Alicia, but not the two young women who are principals). In his Hunting Sketches (Chap. iii), Trollope objects to the woman who expects so many courtesies during the hunt that she holds up the field at every gate and fence and remarks somewhat pointedly in his classification of those who do and those who do not like hunting among those who always do are parsons and ladies. James Grant in One of the Six Hundred (Chap. iv) has Lady Louisa lead the hunt with Berkeley without comment on its impropriety and Lever's young women (Charles O'Malley, Chap. i) ride recklessly, although both are at their own country estates, which may bear out Kate Coventry's remark that there is a different code of conduct for gentlewomen in the country and in the town.

18. Riding Recollections, p. 115.

19. The same, p. 117.

20. The same, p. 118.

21. The same place.

22. For additional comment on the changes, see Trollope's Hunting Sketches, Chap. i.

23. Market Harborough, p. 5.

24. Satanella, pp. 330-331. It is to this group of hunting men that sportsmen like Trollope belong, according to Watson, work cited, p. 229, who considers Trollope to have been the commuter rather than the real fox-hunter.

25. Market Harborough, p. 5.

26. Tilbury Nogo, p. 268.

27. Inside the Bar, pp. 240-241. Compare the style of this passage, straight-forward and unaffected with the more labored style of the reflective passages in the novels.

28. *Riding Recollections*, pp. 37-38. In *The Cream of Leicestershire*, E. Pennell Elmhirst tells of foot people by the hundred assembled to see Cossington Gorse drawn and speaks of three hundred people in the hunt starting for a run, all going through the same gate (p. 234).

29. The same work, p. 38. In Trollope's *Hunting Sketches*, Chap. ii, a young admirer follows the leading horseman too closely and almost jumps on him; the leader's comment: "Do you want to get into my pocket, sir?"

30. The chief hunting scenes: *Digby Grand*, Chap. xi (at the Hall) and Chap. xv (the Shires); *Tilbury Nogo*, Chaps. iii-v (the Shires), xxi (the Provinces), xxv (with Tilbury's own hounds); *General Bounce*, Chap. xxvii; *Kate Coventry*, Chap. xii (at Dangerfield Hall) and xviii (the Queen's Buck Hounds); *The Interpreter*, Chap. xlv (the boar hunt); *Holmby House*, Chap. i (the Pytchley); *Market Harborough*, Chaps. i (the Provinces), x-xi and svi (the Shires); *Inside the Bar*, Chap. xi; *The Queen's Maries*, Chap. iii (the royal stag hunt); *The Brookes of Bridlemere*, Chap. xiv (at the Duke's); *Cerise*, Chap. iv (the royal stag hunt); *The White Rose*, Chap. xlv; *Bones and I*, Chap. viii; *M. or N.* (no hunt, but echoes of it through young Stanwood); *Contraband*, (no hunt, but hunting is in the background, especially Chap. i); *Sarchedon*, Chaps. i (the lion hunt) and xlv (hunting the lion and the mountain bull); *Satanella*, Chap. xxix (the deer hunt); *Uncle John*, Chap. v; *Katerfelto*, Chaps. xxii-xxiii (the Exmoor stag hunt); *Sister Louise*, Chap. v (the royal stag hunt); *Riding Recollections* throughout, but especially Chaps. xiii (the Provinces) and xiv (the Shires); *Roy's Wife*, Chap. xii.

For some runs in other novels, see Mills, *Our Country*, Bk. II, Chap. v; Smedley, *Harry Coverdale's Courtship*, Chap. v; Lawrence, *Guy Livingstone*, Chap. xxxv (Guy is finally injured mortally while taking a jump); Ouida, *Under Two Flags*, Chaps. iii and vi; Henry Kingsley, *Leighton Court*, Chap. x, xii; Charles Kingsley, *Yeast*, Chap. i; and Trollope, *Can You Forgive Her*, Chap. i, svii; *The American Senator*, Chap.s i, x-xii, xx.

The question what is the best hunting scene in Whyte-Melville's novels is one which the present writer is not qualified to answer, for he is completely incompetent to judge the verisimilitude of such scenes. Lord Willoughby de Broke comments that the opening chapter in

Holmby House is thought by some to be a classic in the literature of the chase and "is often mentioned when the question is asked, 'What is the best imaginary description of a run?'" (Sport of Our Ancestors, p. 4). De Broke himself prefers Beckford. Such judgments depend to a certain extent upon distinctions of tone and attitude in writing which may be imperceptible to one not familiar with the English countryside and with English sport. For interesting evaluations of different writers as novelists of the hunt, see Darton's From Surtees to Sassoon and Watson's Robert Smith Surtees.

31. The use of the carted deer was an issue among sportsmen. Surtees had nothing but contempt for it, and in Jorrocks Jaunty Jollities, Chap. iii, reduces it to absurdity by telling of a deer which ended a lively run by jumping into a returning post-chaise passing along the road with the door swinging open.

32. The chief races in Whyte-Melville's novels: Digby Grand, Chap. xvi (Croxton Park) and Chaps. xvii-xviii; Tilbury Nogo, Chap. vii (Ascot) and Chaps. xvi-xvii (a steeple chase); General Bounce, Chap. vii (a military steeplechase); Kate Coventry, Chaps. i (Ascot) and v (Hampton); The Interpreter, Chap. xxi; Holmby House, Chap. xxx (an escape sequence); Market Harborough, Chap. xxv (the steeplechase); The Brookes of Bridlemere, Chap. xxii (a handicap); The White Rose, Chaps. xiv (the steeplechase) and xxxiv (Ascot); Contraband (racing and hunting in the background); Sarchedon, Chap. xxviii (the ride for life); Satanella, Chap. xiii (the Irish handicap); Katerfelto, Chap. xxix (the ride for life); Black but Comely, Chap. xxi (Swansdown), Chap. xxix (Goodwood), and Chap. xxxvi.

33. In the 1860's gentlemen still rode around London; by the 1890's this was impossible (Fortescue, work cited, p. 235).

34. The White Rose, p. 253. See also quotation, above, Chap. xi, Sec. 2. Some of the most spirited of his characters, Baker writes (History of the English Novel, VII, 234), are horses. The horses are frequently spirited and are often prominent in the novels, but Baker's statement could be misleading, for although Whyte-Melville shows affection and respect for the animals there is not the lingering attention or treatment of them as persons which one can find in later animal stories. The rider is still a man and master and the horse an animal; compare

Watson, work cited, p. 182, on the "sentimentality" (as he considers it) of later attitudes, exemplified, he believes in Masefield's poem *Reynard the Fox*. Among the most memorable of mounts in the novels are James Paravant's "Potboy" in *Black but Comely*; Lady Julia's "Cockamaroo" and Walter Brookes' Fugleman in *The Brookes of Bridlemere*; Blanche's "Water King" and Charles' "Haphazard" in *General Bounce*; Kate Coventry's "Brilliant" and "White Stockings"; Daisy Walters' "Satanella" in the novel of that name and in the same novel, Soldier Bill's "Catamount," Lord Macormac's "Whiteboy," and Norah's "Boneen"; and, of course, Katerfelto. To these should be added from the historical novels Vere's "Zuleika" in *The Interpreter* and Sarchedon's "Merodach".

35. Norah in *Satanella* gives a description of taking a bullfinch on Boneen, the little Irish horse: "Such a place beyond! 'Twas as thick as a cabbage-garden--dog-roses, honeysuckles. I'm not sure there wasn't cauliflowers, and all twisted up together to conceal a deep, wide, black-looking hole like a boreen [Irish for a deep, stone-paved lane]"(p. 342).

36. The water jump is the most theatrical incident in the novels. See *Market Harborough*, p. 93; *Kate Coventry*, pp. 145-146; *The Brookes of Bridlemere*, p. 189; and *Satanella*, p. 43.

37. Whyte-Melville makes frequent use of the accident caused by the covered drain: *Market Harborough*, p. 57; *The Brookes of Bridlemere*, p. 190; *Inside the Bar*, p. 252; *Satanella*, p. 344; *Riding Recollections*, p. 134.

38. The scenes in the two most frequently read novels, *Kate Coventry* and *Market Harborough* illustrate this sequence well enough. And if the scenes from *Tilbury Nogo* and *Satanella* are added, the sequence is complete. To the list might be added such occupations as the after-hunt dinner and talk, the inspection of the studs, and the purchasing of horses. There are few scenes in which women follow the hunt in carriages, but see *Roy's Wife*, Chaps. xii-xiii.

39. For example, *Market Harborough* can be "read again with greater pleasure than any of Major Whyte-Melville's works" (De Broke, work cited, p. 64); it is "the only one of his books that still lives" (Fortescue, work cited, p. 231). The critical evaluation to be passed

upon the relative merits of Whyte-Melville's novels involves little problem, and time has recorded an accurate judgment. Though some of the other novels are interesting for one reason or another, those selected for reprint in the Tavistock Sporting Library in 1933 are without question the best as wholes: Market Harborough, Kate Coventry, Satanella, and Riding Recollections. The present writer has not been able to inspect this edition but supposes that Inside the Bar is reprinted with Market Harborough; otherwise, it should be added to the list. Market Harborough was popular in its own time; published in 1861, it was in its seventh edition in 1868.

40. Sadleir's Excursions an exception.

41. For an account of Leicestershire hunting, see A. E. Burnaby, "A Week in Leicestershire" in Frederick's Fox Hunting, already cited, pp. 220-230, and the beautifully printed and illustrated volumes by Guy Paget, The Melton Mowbray of John Ferneley (1782-1860), 1931. For the kind of enthusiastic sentiment about Melton's "green existence," somewhat snobbish in tone, that must have sickened men like Surtees, see the Preface to Pennell-Elmhirst's The Cream of Leicestershire. According to Guy Paget, the best views of the "'acres of woodlands and oceans of grass' of which Whyte-Melville sings" are those by Henry Alken, the series "Leicestershire Coverts" (Fox-Hunting, ed. Frederick, p. 324).

42. Ellis, Mainly Victorians, p. 105, calls Market Harborough preeminently the novel of the Pytchley Hunt. According to maps of the hunting countries (see Pennell-Elmhirst's The Cream of Leicestershire, for example), there is a Leicestershire side to the Pytchley, but most of it is in Northamptonshire. (See the chapter on Northamptonshire in Frederick's Fox Hunting where Frederick discusses Holmby House /p. 234/, and Holmby House itself, which is a Northamptonshire novel and opens with a run of the Pytchley. Market Harborough is in Leicestershire where the Belvoir, Cottesmore, Fernie, and Quorn packs hunted (see Frederick, work cited, p. 220). But Market Harborough is on the edge of Pytchley, and Brampton Wood and Braybrook which are the scenes of a run in Market Harborough are within the Pytchley.

43. See the opening chapter of Surtees's Jorrock Jaunty Jollities in which Surtees promises in mock heroic style to offer more than "the paltry feets of beardless Meltonians." Surtees goes on to show, with a Hotspurian

contempt, the disaster which comes upon a soft Meltonian over the hard course in Surrey. Lever in the opening chapter of Charles O'Malley provides a somewhat similar scene except that the Meltonian is a worthy competitor and succumbs to the rough Irish terrain only after a hard struggle. Henry Kingsley in Leighton Court, which contains more hunting than is usual in his novels, has the old groom say that Leicestershire hunting is "too gentlemanly" (Chap. xi), in contrast with Dartmoor hunting. But despite these rebellious voices, the fashionable reader (or the would-be fashionable reader) looked to hear about Leicestershire, and it is this fashionable hunting that appears in Lawrence's Guy Livingstone and Ouida's Under Two Flags. Bertie Cecil (Under Two Flags, Chap. i) liked a fast thing with Melton men from Thorpe Trussels to Ranksborough" and for Zu-Zu the ballet dancer he takes the "prettiest little box in the world, in the neighborhood of Market Harborough" (Chap. iv).

44. Mr. Sawyer was evidently representative of a group who visited from the provinces each year to hunt on the grass (Burnaby in Frederick, work cited, p. 220) and returned to the provinces to extend Leicestershire ways (Apsley, work cited, p. 372).

45. See above, Chap. viii, Sec. 3.

46. Market Harborough, pp. 143-145.

47. The Brookes of Bridlemere, pp. 188-189.

48. The same, p. 189.

49. The same, pp. 189-190.

50. The same, p. 191.

51. Sport of Our Ancestors, p. 63.

52. London Illustrated News, 28 December 1878. R. H. Carlisle, Fox-Hunting Past and Present, 1908, p. 159, lists six notable hunting men killed by falls from their horses (including Whyte-Melville). Such facts give some slight credibility to passages like the following from Lawrence's Guy Livingstone (Chap. xxvi): "Foxes were strong and plentiful with the Belvoir and the Pytchley; and, during two months of open weather, many a straight-goer had died gallantly in the midst of the wide pasture-grounds, testifying with his last breath to the generalship of Goodall and Payne."

53. Besides the quotation given in the text, see Market Harborough, p. 9; General Bounce, p. 24 and p. 241; Bones and I, p. 256; Roy's Wife, pp. 6 and 25, Satanella, p. 48. In Contraband, p. 329, Sir Henry's escape across the channel from his debts is the basis for a comparison with horse racing.

54. M. or N., p. 119.

55. The same, p. 138.

56. Bones and I, p. 307.

57. Even Thackeray (Henry Esmond, Chap. xii), speaking of Lord Mohun: "Such men. . . can no more go through a day without a woman to pursue than a fox-hunter without his sport after breakfast." One of the most frequently quoted sayings from Surtees is that about the fact that nothing is so uncertain as scent, except a woman.

58. Charles Kingsley in Two Years Ago, Chap. xviii, has Lord Scoutbush speak of Surtees' books a "wilful" portrayal of the uglier and baser side of sporting life. But his brother Henry (Ravenshoe, Chap. xli) speaks of "our old friend Mr. Sponge."

59. Compare Bartlett's Quotations, 11th ed., 1937, which probably represents an older selection, with the newer Oxford Dictionary of Quotations which reverses the proportion of space for the two authors.

60. Times Literary Supplement, 16 June 1921.

61. Sassoon, Memoirs of George Sherston, pp. 153-154.

62. See above, Chap. iv, Note 44.

63. See the list of racing scenes, Note 32 above.

64. Contrast Lawrence's Guy Livingstone.

65. For accidents at the steeplechase see particularly The White Rose, Chap. xiv, and Black but Comely, Chap. xxxvi.

66. But it is not quite true that Mr. Sawyer's shrewdness is the only mention in the novels of questionable dealings, as Fortescue (p. 231; see also Baker VII, 234)

claims. See, for example, Digby Grand, Chap. xviii, and Black but Comely), Chaps. xix, xxix and xxxvi, both of which record sharp practice (the first and last novels being alike in this as in many other details).

# CHAPTER XV

## Love and Marriage

### Section (1) Introduction

Sport and the manners of fashionable life are two important elements in the novels, love and marriage together make a third. But the two are separated with a revealing consistency. Happy courtships and happy marriages are seldom given prominent place, and when the wedding bells do peal for the young couple at the end of a novel (not infrequently for two young couples), a curtain is drawn. Nor is the curtain raised again until husband and wife have reached the point of bored toleration or active acrimony. Almost every character who is unhappy has had an unfortunate love affair in the past, and disappointments in love account for almost every fault--the cruel coldness of Lady Olivia (in Good for Nothing), the mean shrewishness of Mrs. Dennison (in Uncle John, or the habitual philandering of Sir Henry Hallaton (in Contraband). All aging characters are provided with a past which includes heartbreak, even Miss Primrose, the school teacher (in General Bounce) and Mrs. Battersea, the woman who lives on the edge of "society" (in Contraband). The cumulative effect is that the one point of intensity in existence, the one experience in which man becomes actuely aware of his

very being is the moment when love is bitterly and disillusioningly frustrated.

But this awareness of emotional intensity is surrounded in the novels by a sentimentality and banality of interpretation which robs it of its force as a possible unifying theme. It results for one thing in a simplification of characterization and motivation--all distortions of happiness can be explained by the one simple fact of an early disappointment in love. And it is accompanied by a refusal (whether conscious or not) to accept such a fact assuming that it exists: the novelist for example when engaged in a scene showing a hopeless complication of cross-purposes, hurt pride, and mutual insensibility, often interjects the thought that a single kind word at the right moment might save the happiness of a couple and by some magic disentangle a knot which several years of difficulties have tied.

## Section (2) Men in Love

In the early novels, the young lovers are the victims of life, and the harrowing but unconvincing torments of Charles Kettering, Vere Egerton, Gilbert Orme, and Gerard Ainslie supply the drama, as they go "all down hill" into a ruin which idleness and habits of self-indulgence contribute more than a fatal passion. In the later novels

the emphasis is shifted from these to the loves of men who are simpler, more genuine, somewhat older, and more experienced (in self-discipline at least, not necessarily in the fashionable world although most of them move within the framework of "society"): Lord Bearwarden of M. or N.; Uncle Joseph and Goldthred of Contraband; General St. Josephs of Satanella; the Rev. Algernon Lexley the country parson, of Uncle John; Mr. Roy of Roy's Wife; Mervyn Strange, the clergyman, and James Paravant, owner of a small country estate, of Black but Comely. Several have already experienced a love affair which has left its mark (Lord Bearwarden, the General, Mr. Roy); several are older than the women whom they love, and the best drawn (the General) is middle-aged; none are dandies (although Lord Bearwarden and Mr. Roy are fully at home in the world of society and the General shows an old-fashioned gallantry). In addition three of the central characters, Sir Henry Hallaton of Contraband, Lord Fitzowen of Roy's Wife, and Lord. St. Moritz of Black but Comely, are middle-aged roues of varying amiability; and in Uncle John two important characters in secondary roles are the aging squire whose name is given to the book and his friend, old General Pike. (The young dandies still appear, but in relatively subordinate roles, pursuing conventional love affairs successfully, not without difficulties but wholly without the histrionics of their predecessors; among them are Dick

Stanmore of M. or N., Frank Vanguard of Contraband; Daisy Walters of Satanella; and Horace Maxwell of Uncle John.) Most of these characters are foreshadowed in the earlier novels. Lord St. Helier in Digby Grand is a forerunner of General St. Josephs (as are Sir Archibald Brooke of the Brookes of Bridlemere though Sir Archibald is not currently in love. Vandeleur of The White Rose in the fact that he is a middle-aged lover anticipates the later novels, but is differently conceived.

Lord Bearwarden, the first of the older lovers chronologically, is something of a dummy figure, a Gaston D'Orville[1] without stain, an aristocratic dandy matured. He had been deserted by the woman to whom he had given his heart (the shock is somewhat lessened evidently by the fact that the false woman was "a lady of somewhat lower social standing than his own, of rather questionable antecedents, and /one/ whom the world accepted to a certain extent on sufferance"[2]--though in succeeding novels Whyte-Melville makes heroines of just such women). Lord Bearwarden had found solace in the never-failing comradeship of the stout hearts of his regiment and in doing his duty in silence. "Indeed, if it /the desertion/ had not wholly changed his real self, it had encrusted him with that hardness and roughness of exterior which he turned instinctively to the world."[3] But in response to the proud beauty of Maud, Lord Bearwarden begins to thaw:

> When he met Miss Bruce at Lady Goldthred's, no doubt he admired her beauty and approved of her manner, but it was neither beauty nor manner, nor could he have explained what it was, that caused the pulses within him to stir, as they stirred long ago--that brought back a certain flavour of the old draught he had quaffed so eagerly, to find it so bitter at the dregs. Another meeting with Maud, a dance or two, a whisper on a crowded staircase, and Lord Bearwarden told himself that the deep wound had healed at last; that the grass was growing fesh and fair over the grave of a dead love; that for him too, as for others, there might still be an interest in the chances of the great game.[4]

Lord Bearwarden's successors are less certain in their actions, and in young Goldthred of Contraband (who is simple and unfashionable and somewhat awkward, possessing a "simple honest nature, homely though courteous manner, and utter absence of pretension"),[5] General St. Josephs, the Rev. Algernon Lexley, and James Paravant, the novelist comes nearer genuine achievement in the balance of dignity with ridiculousness and pathos. General St. Josephs is his most successful sketch.

General St. Josephs is a veteran of the Crimea and of a generation now getting on in years.[6] He

> knew what it was to starve in the Crimea and broil in the Mutiny; had been shot at very often by guns of various calibres; had brought into discipline one of the worst-drilled regiments in the service, and was a distinguished officer, past forty years of age.[7]

"A handsome man, and a proud, cold, reserved, deep-hearted, veiling under an icy demeanour a temper sensitive as a girl's,"[8] he is Blanche Douglas' latest conquest. Moving among a younger set, a middle-aged lover must inevitably be

ridiculous at moments; Whyte-Melville permits this while at the same time preserving a fundamental dignity which carries the General through undefeated. In Blanche, too, Whyte-Melville permits gratitude to grow into fondness, yet at the same time preserves the restlessness under bondage of any sort which is part of her nature. To sustain two such characters, together with the ironies of situation which recur throughout the book, and in addition to intensify these ironies and contradictions as the implications of the situation become more fully apparent, without resorting to a false solution, is an accomplishment of relatively mature craftmanship.

For the most part in Satanella, the General's difficulties are presented in terms of the characters in the story and allowed to carry their own effect without such elaborate comment as the torments of a Gerard Ainslie, for example, called forth. The General, after all, is middle-aged, and his strenuous suit is a strain on his constitution as well as on his heart. At one point when he leaves Blanche at her door he is sure her hand clung longer than usual in his clasp when the time came to say good-bye. "In spite of a headache and certain angry twinges of rheumatism, this gallant officer had never felt so happy in his life."[9] A few days later, the General's young carefree rival, Daisy, walking home at an hour so late that in Piccadilly he meets only a drunken woman, in

Curzon Street a single policeman, and by Audley Square a libertine cat, he sees the General with hat pushed down and collar pulled up walking slowly on the other side of the street.

> "Now what can he be up to?" thought Daisy. . . Ought to have had his nose under the blankets long ago . . .Might have sown his wild oats by this time, one would think! Well, it's no business of mine, only I hope he wears flannel next to his skin, and won't catch cold. . . .
>
> Sticking his hands in his pockets, Daisy shook his head in virtuous disapproval of his senior, never dreaming that a man of the General's age could be fool enough to pace a wind-swept street under a lady's window for an hour after she had retired to bed.[10]

Like Uncle Joseph in Contraband,[11] the General is forced into the company of men more youthful and more at ease socially than he:

> It was provoking, degrading, to know that in the presence of Miss Douglas he appeared at his very worst; that when he rode out with her, he was either idiotically simple, or morosely preoccupied; that when he called at her house, he could neither find topics for conversation, nor excuses to go away; that in every society, others whom he rated as his inferiors, must have seemed infinitely pleasanter, wiser, better informed, and more agreeable; and that he, professedly a man of experience, and a man of the world, lost his head, like a raw boy, at the first word she addressed him, without succeeding in convincing her that he had lost his heart. Then he vowed to rebel--to wean himself by degrees--to break the whole thing off at once--to go out of town, leaving no address--to assert his independence, show he could live without her, and never see her again! But when she asked him to take her to the play, he said he should be delighted, and was![12]

He resents his own friends talking about "fellows of our age."[13]

> How insufferably prosy the conversation of an old comrade at the next table--a jovial veteran. . . . Never before had this worthy's discourse seemed so idiotic, his stomach so obtrusive, his chuckles so fatuous and inane. What did he mean by talking about "fellows of our age to St. Josephs, who was seven years his junior in the Army list, and five in his baptismal register? Why couldn't he eat without wheezing, laugh without coughing?[14]

The general, although not interested in steeplechasing, accompanies Daisy to see Satanella work out, because he feels "a morbid attraction towards the young officer" who represents the type of young dandy with whom the middle-aged lover must compete. (Also he is curious to see the horse which Blanche Douglas rides so frequently, to whom in fact young Walters has given Blanche's nickname.) Daisy's breeziness shocks the General, and the young officer's own unawareness of the General's feelings adds a touch of pathos and irony both to the situation. Daisy, for example, has just spoken enthusiastically of Blanche Douglas' horsemanship, has even visualized her in boots and breeches and silk jacket winning the steeplechase at Punchestown. The General winces first at the casual freedom with which the young man speaks of Blanche by her first name ("It was not his habit to call young ladies by their Christian names; and to talk thus familiarly of this one seemed a desecration indeed").[15] At Daisy's picture of Miss Douglas riding in the steeplechase,

> St. Josephs positively stood aghast. Could he believe his ears? Silk jacket! Boots and breeches! And this was the woman he delighted to honour. To

> have annihilated his flippant young acquaintance on the spot would have given him intense satisfaction, but he was obliged to content himself with contemptuous silence and sundry glances of scorn. His displeasure, however, seemed quite lost on Daisy, who conversed freely all the way back to town, and took leave of his indignant senior with unimpaired affability when they arrived.[16]

Despite the General, it is Daisy's insouciance and not the old soldier's old-fashioned courtesy which catches Blanche's heart. (Daisy, as a matter of fact, never fully realizes either that Blanche is desperately in love with him or that the General is desperately in love with Blanche. His indifference to the two of them--an indifference somewhat disguised by his habitual amiability which keeps him on terms that superficially seem to be those of intimacy--is one of the several touches which sharpen his character and give the story mild but sustained irony.)

Blanche's imperious manner and alternating mood of angry rebellion and reserved compassion keep the General in constant bewilderment. His most humble efforts to please take the least effect, for it is his very submissiveness and courtly tact which make Blanche both certain of him and slightly contemptuous. But gradually she comes to respect and to value his unfailing and sensitive considerateness and his fidelity, the more so as she herself finds her own fondness for Daisy blocked by his apparent obliviousness to her feelings. (At one point he exclaims revealingly, "By Jove, you're a trump! . . . .I mean, you've so good a

heart, you ought to be a man.") The General's own occasional rebellions--although they arouse Blanche's interest momentarily, at the same time bringing forth her sharpest and most stinging responses--leave him only more enslaved than ever.

Blanche turns to the General for financial help and commits herself to marry him. Then his courtesy and thoughtfulness--he never takes advantage of her indebtedness to him by word or manner--move her to further respect with which a growing fondness now mingles. Although this fondness develops side by side with her infatuation for Daisy, it does not replace it; it even intensifies her rebellion against the basic indignity of her bondage, a response which in turn increases her self-contempt. Not until she has broken free from the General in violation of her own word, and has been released from the equal bondage of hope by Daisy's marriage to Norah, does she see that it may be possible to reward the General with an affection which though different from her feeling for Daisy would justify her in marrying him. But then it is too late. (An accident--her fall with Satanella on the hunting field--intervenes. But at least this once Whyte-Melville has chosen better to end the problem by an accident, having worked out in the preceding chapters in some detail a situation in which all the probabilities are continually against success. In this novel, to heart, you ought to be a man.') The General's own occasional rebellions--although they arouse Clarel's interest momentarily, at the same time bringing forth her sharpest and most stinging responses--leave him only more enslaved than ever.

Blanche turns to the General for financial help and compels herself to marry him. Then his courtesy and thoughtfulness--he never takes advantage of her indebtedness to him by word or manner--move her to further respect with which a growing fondness now mingles. Although this fondness develops side by side with her infatuation for Daisy, it does not replace it; it even intensifies her rebellion against the basic indignity of her bondage, a response which in turn increases her self-contempt. Not until she has broken free from the General in violation of her own word, and has been released from the equal bondage of hope by Daisy's marriage to Gerald, does she see that it may be possible to reward the General with an affection which though different from her feeling for Daisy would justify her in marrying him. But then it is too late. (An accident--her fall with Satanella on the hunting field--intervenes. But at least this once Whyte-Melville has chosen better to end the problem by an accident, having worked out in the preceding chapters in some detail a situation in which all the probabilities are continually against success. In this novel, to preserve the ironies of might-have-been, even by a contrived accident, is more fitting than to peal the marriage bells.)

Among the important scenes between Blanche and her General is that in which she confesses that she has used the money he has loaned her to pay the debts of Daisy Walters. Before she can bring herself to this confession, the General receives an anonymous letter (from Mrs. Lushington) telling him the facts. But at the very next meeting, Blanche (unaware that the General knows) undertakes to tell him herself. (So the introduction of the anonymous letter is a device to intensify the interview between the two rather than a mechanical means of forwarding the plot.) Blanche tells her admirer that it is time they understood one another. Even at this point she must be frank and cannot disguise her feelings toward the General. "I feel I could tell you things I would not breathe to any other living being. You're so safe, so honourable, so punctiliously, so ridiculously honourable, and I like you for it." The General looks "grateful." (Blanche has put her finger on the General's strength. It is the very "ridiculous" consistency of his tact and honorableness that carries him through the affair with dignity.) Blanche goes on to say that she has deceived him, deceived him in a way he could never imagine or forgive. "So people seem to think," he observes "coolly," and his calm confidence increases

throughout the scene: for once the situation is such that the only quality of character which can give him mastery is the very quality which has placed him so often before at a disadvantage. Still speaking of the letter, he comments, "As you have chosen to make me your father-confessor, perhaps I ought to say your grand-father confessor, this morning, you may as well look through it, before we put that precious production in the fire." (The General is not without a dry sense of humor. Later, when Blanche finally breaks her promise, explaining why by letter, he merely murmurs, "It's a good letter, but I prefer the one Julia wrote to Juan.")[17] Then the General (like Algernon Lexley in the novel which follows this one) insists that Blanche answer his proposal of marriage before he listens to her explanation. Even now Blanche cannot match the General's instinctive tact. "Listen," she begins, "you know I'M not very young." The General "bowed in silence. The reflection naturally presented itself that if she was not very young, he must be very old."[18]

After she has finished her explanation, the General asks whether Daisy also knows where his sudden help came from, and his confidence increases when Blanche turns to him now in alarm for advice. He would

> no doubt have replied in exceedingly affectionate terms, but that he was interrupted by the opening of the drawing-room door, and the entrance of a servant, who, in a matter-of-fact voice, announced

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After she has finished her explanation, the General asks whether Emily also knows where his sudden ally came from, and his confidence increases when Blanche turns to him as in alarm for advice. He would

> no doubt have replied in exceedingly efficacious terms, but that he was interrupted by the opening of the drawing-room door, and the entrance of a servant, who, in a matter-of-fact voice, announced

a visitor--

> "Mr. Walters!"
>
> Blanche turned white to her lips, and muttered rapidly, "Won't you stay, General? Do!"
>
> But the General had already possessed himself of his hat, and with an air of good-humoured confidence, that she felt did honour both to herself and him, took a courteous leave of his hostess, and gave a hearty greeting to the new-comer as they passed each other on the threshold.
>
> "I think I've won the battle," muttered the old soldier, mounting his horse briskly in the street; "though I've left the enemy in possession of the ground."[19]

## Section (3) Marriage

Throughout the novels, the scenes of fashionable life which come the nearest to successful satire and pointedness are those of conflict between husband and wife, usually a husband and wife past the first flush of romantic attachment, somewhat bored with the pleasures of leisured existence and with one another, each too proud to take a first step which may resolve petty differences, each alienating the other by mis-timed flippancies, which cover injured or hurt sensitiveness within, both maintaining the necessary outward courtesy when in public, drifting farther apart with each failure. Besides several passages of generalized moral reflection on this theme, Whyte-Melville introduces it, sometimes gratuitously[20] into several

novels: the relationship of Victor and Constance de Rohan in The Interpreter; the estrangement between Captain George and Cerise after they are married, in Cerise (one of the few times Whyte-Melville pictures the life of two lovers after the ceremony and still provides a happy ending);[21] the violent recriminations between Gerard Ainslie and Fanny Draper and between Vandeleur and Norah Welby in The White Rose; the estrangement between Lord Bearwarden and Maud in M. or N.;[22] the bored toleration existing between Lord and Lady Bellinger in Katerfelto; the growing weariness of the King with Louise in Sister Louise; the rupture between John Roy and Nelly in Roy's Wife and then the strain of Mr. Roy's affair with the widowed Lady Jane; and the disastrous married career of Forward James and Bell in Black but Comely.

One can add to these, other types of unhappy marriage: the yoking together of a profligate or dishonest man and an unsuspecting woman (Sir Guy and Lady Scapegrace in Kate Coventry, William and Ada Latimer in Good for Nothing, John Picard and "Jin" Ross in Contraband, and Delancey and Laura Blair in Uncle John); marriage between a sensitive husband and a cold and haughty or shrewish and nagging wife (Mr. Orme and Lady Olivia in Good for Nothing, and "Uncle John" and "Aunt Emily" in Uncle John); impecunious marriages which leave a widow to make her own way (Mrs. Blyn, Ada's mother, in Good for Nothing, or Laura's mother in Uncle

John); or affairs which leave a disgraced woman with her illegitimate child (Mary Delaval's mother in General Bounce); or marriages in which a dull or retiring husband remains in the background while the gay wife whirls alone in society (Mrs. Lumley in Kate Coventry, Mrs. Lushington in Satanella, to an extent Bel Paravant in Black but Comely, and, of course, Mme. de Montespan in Sister Louise); wives deserted by husbands (Ada Latimer in Good for Nothing and Jin Ross in Contraband) or husbands deserted by their wives (the Rev. Josiah Bagshot in Tilbury Nogo, Lord Bearwarden in M. or N., Sir Henry Hallaton in Contraband); disappointed lovers embittered for life by the failure of their love, often catching at some wisp of fulfillment by watching over the child of the loved one who married another (Aunt Deborah in Kate Coventry, Sir Archibald Brooke in The Brookes of Bridlemere, Mrs. Dennison in Uncle John).[23] The cumulative effect is a sombre picture of the relations between the sexes, a picture which makes one wonder at Whyte-Melville's persistence in cheerful hopefulness about the prospects of young lovers. But there are, in fact, two worlds in the novels which never break in upon one another, the world of misunderstanding and antipathy between husbands and wives, and the world of conventional romance between the Frank Vanguards and Helen Hallatons.[24]

That cumulative evidence[25] points to some deep-seated malady does not suggest itself to the novelist.

Whyte-Melville finds no solution except to hint that a kind or generous word at the right moment might initiate a contrary cycle of mutual forbearance and reconciliation or to end the impasse by the death of one of the two and give the other a new chance, possibly after a period of repentance. Actually it is not clear that the writer himself realized the extent to which the problem dominates large parts of the novels, for these pictures of marital difficulty are usually subordinate to a stereotyped plot, an accompaniment rather than the central theme. Even so they stand out not only because of their frequency but because of the relative skill which the writer shows, despite many over-rhetorical and sentimental passages, in depicting "the disenchantment, the disagreements, the recriminations, the offended pride on one side, the growing dislike and blank hopelessness on the other."[26]

## Section (4) Wives and Mothers

One striking fact about the novels is that Whyte-Melville avoids portrayal of normal family life and relations between husband and wife by the simple expedient of presenting only motherless young men and women.[27] (This is true of the historical novels as well as of the society novels.) Only two of the young principals in the entire series have mothers, Cerise in Cerise and Gilbert Orme in

Good for Nothing, and they are fatherless. (Rosine, who is fatherless to begin with, leaves her mother for an unprotected life in Paris shortly after the beginning of the novel.) Two important secondary characters have both father and mother, and so might be considered exceptions, Lady Julia in The Brookes of Bridlemere and Norah Macormac in Satanella, but Julia's mother is a superficial vain woman[28] and the picture of the Macormac household is a friendly gesture toward Irish amiability, a somewhat wistful gesture.) Often the young men and women are orphans, brought up by a bachelor uncle or maiden aunt. (Here again the exception tests the rule, for Mrs. Dennison--"Aunt Emily"--is a shrewish and nagging wife to her husband, Uncle John, though the example they set has no apparent effect upon Annie.)[29]

Jin Ross in Contraband and Semiramis in Sarchedon have mothers, but they rather than the young sons are the principals of the stories. Other mothers all appear in the early novels, and are variations on the conventional figure of the fashionable novel, the matchmaking mother:[30] Mrs. Cotherstone in Tilbury Nogo, Lady Mt. Helicon in General Bounce (for completeness, Gingham Blacke in the same novel should be mentioned), Lady Horsingham in Kate Coventry, and Mrs. Dove of Market Harborough.

Such a complete and consistent elimination of an

important phase of family life from the novels explains in part at least the reader's feeling that many of the scenes are thin and lop-sided and that in these novels one is in some way looking at all this life from the outside: the reader leaves the characters at their front doors and then waits for them to reappear on their way to the next social gathering, and what has gone on in the meanwhile belongs to another and an unknown world. (Except in the country house scenes, in which there is more freedom, the reader is admitted only to scenes for two in a woman's drawing room or boudoir or to an officer's barracks quarters, but seldom to any other phase of domestic life.) Cumulatively too, this unbalanced picture may give an effect of greater freedom of action among the young women than the framework of Victorian society, with the mother hovering near, permitted actually. It certainly reduces--very nearly eliminates--the vast and complicated marriage mart which in the novels of Trollope extends like a network over the whole island.

## Section (5) Scenes of Satirical Comedy

These scenes of marital infelicity tend toward satirical comedy more frequently than toward drama and tragedy.[31] Scenes such as that between Lord and Lady Bellinger in Katerfelto are representative. Lord and Lady

Bellinger, "after a marriage of vanity with some little inclination" have occupied separate apartments now for some time and have reached the point at which they enter and leave a ball separately. At the end of the first part of the story which takes place in London, Lord Bellinger must leave for the country on a mission and comes to his wife's apartment to tell her. Both my Lord and my Lady are out of sorts.

> Lord Bellinger entered accordingly, dressed in great splendor, with cane, hat, and snuff-box in hand. Thus encumbered, he made shift, nevertheless, to take the tips of his wife's fingers and carry them to his lips, inquiring at the same time how her ladyship did, and whether she had slept well.
>
> Her ladyship had not closed an eye, of course. She was feverish, poorly, and far from strong! Thus establishing a position of defense from the first.
>
> "Zounds, madam!" exclaimed he, "so much the better--you will the more readily hear what I have to say."
>
> "Surely, you need not swear," she replied with frigid dignity. "No gentleman swears so early in the day."
>
> He laughed, and continued more good-humouredly, "Your ladyship is very happy in town, are you not?"
>
> "Your lordship must be a fool to ask such a question," she returned sharply. "If you neglected me less, you would know that in my position, and with my health, it is ridiculous to talk of being happy anywhere."
>
> "And yet you look charmingly," continued her husband, scanning his own handsome person in the glass.
>
> "Compared to faces which your lordship is in the habit of studying, mine is perhaps tolerably well-favoured," said she; "but nothing is so deceptive

> as one's appearance, and the air of this town is simply killing me by inches."
>
> "Then it shall do murder no longer," he answered kindly. "I must leave for the West this very afternoon. My coach is waiting at the door to take me to the minister's. There is not a moment to be lost. It is the King's business; I suppose I ought to say, God bless him!"
>
> "Well," she asked coldly, "what concern is that of mine?"
>
> "Will you not come with me?" was his reply. "We have been living separate lives too long. Perhaps each of us is better than the other thinks. Let us give it a trial and see if we cannot be happy together for a few weeks. We have been very uncomfortable apart for a good many years."
>
> The tears were rising to her eyes. A kind word or a caress might have turned the balance even now; but it was his lordship's habit to assume carelessness of manner at the moment he was most interested, and instead of putting his arm around her waist, he busied himself adjusting cravat and ruffles in the glass. She felt and showed she was annoyed.
>
> "I cannot leave town," she objected," at a moment's notice. I wonder you can ask such a thing."
>
> He looked in her face, disappointed and perhaps a little hurt.
>
> "My lady," said he, "you're a puzzle!"
>
> "My lord," said she, "you're a brute!"[32]

For Whyte-Melville this is excellent comedy, economical and pointed.

Roy's Wife acknowledges the growing self-consciousness of the middle-class and the necessity of redefining the conception of gentleman to include those unfamiliar with the manners of modish and fashionable life.

The book is weak and thin, but for a few chapters there is amusing comedy and pathos in Nelly's attempts to be a lady (and near the end somewhat more bitter comedy in the relationship between Mr. Roy and Lady Jane de Banier, a widow and former flame of Mr. Roy's, whom he takes up again somewhat prematurely before he is certain of his divorce.)

Nelly's inadequacies impress themselves on Mr. Roy when they first entertain at Royston Grance, by a dinner for a few friends from London and others who are country neighbors. Problems of precedence and of special favor disturb Nelly during the preparations, and Mr. Roy seeks escape in the stable where he smokes a cigar and consults his groom "on such inexhaustible topics as the grey's fetlock and the chestnut's cough." He turns over in his mind the thought that he might have been wiser not to have married at all.

> While dinner lasts it will do well enough, but I know what women are. They'll find her out in the drawing-room, and they'll let her see they've found her out. Nelly will lose her head, and say or do something that will make me feel hot all over. I wish she hadn't asked them! I wish the cook would get drunk, or the kitchen chimney catch fire, or something frightful would happen to get one out of the whole d--d thing! [33]

After dinner, when the men join the ladies in the drawing-room, it is just as he feared.

> He had told her particularly to cultivate Mrs. Granton, and there was Mrs. Granton on a sofa with Miss Bruce, at the far end of the room. The two

> other ladies of consideration sat at a distant table, showing photographs to the mature spinster, who looked more than half asleep.[34]

"D--n it! Nelly," he whispers over her shoulder, "don't let them send you to Coventry in your own house!"

But the next morning Nelly is quite pleased with what she thinks is her success.

> "I never made a single mistake, did I?" she asked next morning at breakfast, peeping triumphantly round the tea-turn at her husband.
>
> "Not many," he answered. "You made the move after dinner to the rector's wife instead of Mrs. Granton, and you didn't half take notice of that tiresome old Lady Meadowbank."
>
> Nelly's face fell. "I'm so sorry, dear," said she. "It's nice of you to want to be kind to her, poor woman, for she's a widow."
>
> "Oh, it's not for that," he answered sharply. "You never seem to understand things, Nelly. She owns the best covert in the country."
>
> Mrs. Roy looked rather sad and held her tongue.[35]

Nelly continues to try hard. Somewhat later, at dinner alone with her husband she tries to keep the conversation going while the three servants are in the room at least, but "as she originated topic after topic they fell successively to the ground." Finally she presses her husband for an explanation (he has eaten less and has drunk more than usual).

> "Either you didn't like your dinner, or else you're not well."
>
> "The dinner was no worse than usual," he answered ungraciously; "and I don't see why you should say

> I'm not well because I can't jabber about nothing with three servants in the room. A man needn't ask his wife to excuse him, I suppose, whenever he feels tired?"
>
> "Or cross," she replied hastily, for his tone cut her to the quick.
>
> "Or bored," was the unkind rejoinder. "I think that's nearer the mark!"
>
> Her eyes filled with tears, and after five minutes of painful silence she left the room.[36]

Not the least of Nelly's troubles are her sporting solecisms: she speaks of "seeing a hunt" instead of "going out hunting" (although to the uninitiated Nelly's choice seems more proper for a viewing of the chase from a distance in a carriage), or of "tumbling off" a horse instead of "falling with" a horse (when speaking to a good rider), of a "river" instead of a "brook." When she suggests after the hunt which she has "gone to" in Miss Bruce's carriage, that her husband ride home in the carriage with them, it is not only the impropriety of her volunteering the invitation but her selection of verbs which angers the sensitive gentleman. "I need not thank you for an invitation," he tells her, "that is not yours to give, and as I am rather wet, I prefer riding my horse to the drive you are good enough to offer me in a carriage that is not your own!"[37] (Nelly puts up with Mr. Roy until he tells her he wishes he had never married her. But despite the separation and imminent divorce all is

made well at the end. Nell knows that "wayward, unjust as he had been, he must have loved her in spite of all."

> She pressed her forehead hard against his breast, and then looked fondly up in his face.
>
> "But you didn't marry a lady, you know," she murmured. "Will you never be sorry for that again?"
>
> "A lady!" he repeated, and she could not doubt the answer came straight from his heart. "Why, Nell, you are the best and highest of ladies--a true, loving woman, far above rubies, and more precious than the finest gold!)[38]

With more serious scenes, as the final passage of Roy's Wife attests, Whyte-Melville is less happy, and the same descent from somewhat successful comedy to sentimentality can be traced in several other novels. In Uncle John of the novel by the same name, Whyte-Melville presents a patient, kindly man who has borne all his life the naggings of a shrewish and dictatorial wife. One scene early in the story contains amusement, that in which Aunt Emily invades the privacy of Juncle John's den with her usual flow of reproaches and is maneuvered into assenting to the marriage of Lexley and Miss Blair against her actual judgement when her husband, counting on her contrariness, deliberately opposes what he himself wants. But the acid of skepticism with which Uncle John's saintly patience and kindliness is touched early in the novel does not prevent him from making eager efforts at the end to have his niece Annie married before he dies. Nor is he developed as a

character sufficiently during the novel for his death to be as moving as the author clearly intends it to be; and Aunt Emily's remorse, just before he dies, for her lifetime of nagging is a concession to sentimentality which violates all consistency of character.[39]

In the conflicts between Vandeleur and Nora and between Fanny and Gerard in the first part of The White Rose, Whyte-Melville comes nearest to an achievement in serious drama. Gerard and Nora are conventional and secondary to this achievement although they are the principals of the novel. (When they alone carry on the novel in the second part, it declines rapidly in substance.) Gerard's melancholy posturings as the despairing gambler in the first part add nothing and intrude upon the main problem, adjustments of character between the two couples. Nora's proud apathy is more convincing and is adequate enough characterization to sustain the more intense development of Vandeleur himself. Vandeleur is the best prepared character in the novels, the most genuinely (not merely melodramatically) intense, and potentially the most complex.[40] His development, too, is dramatized throughout several chapters in the novel, instead of being summarized merely. (Uncle John provides an example of this habitual weakness: Laura is caught at the beginning of the story just before a turn in her development, but the detail concerning her early life is introduced hastily all in a character sufficiently during the novel for his death to be as moving as the author clearly intends it to be; and Aunt Melly's reversal, just before she dies, of her lifetime of nagging is a concession to sentimentality which violates all consistency of character.[39]

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Further, if one looks at the first part of The White Rose as a study in marital relationships and considers the plot merely as a somewhat ill-contrived framework to support the real substance, the novel is superior to Satanella, the best of the later novels, in complexity, the parallel developments reenforcing one another rather than proceeding in a loose relationship. The same problem is seen simultaneously in two aspects or at two different levels, a fact which gives greater depth to the story than do the loose structures of the other novels.

When Vandeleur is first presented in the novel, he is apparently a man of the world, experienced, somewhat fast, but because of his age, through with arduous dissipation. He has settled down as a landed gentleman who enjoys the effect which his worldly reputation has upon the less sophisticated.

> Mr. Vandeleur always drove fast. He liked to know that the poor countryman breaking stones on the road, or laying the fence by its side, looked after him as he flashed by, with stolid admiration on his dull face, and muttered, "Ah! there goes Squire Vandeleur surelie."[41]

Although he does not entertain frequently, he maintains acquaintanceships as varied as that with the Rev. Mr. Welby, Nora's scholarly father, who finds in him the only neighbor who can talk intelligently about the classical translations in which the clergyman engages, and that with Fanny Draper, the attractive miller's daughter, naturally shrewd in the ways of men, who finds in Vandeleur's worldliness a response to her own recklessness.

Vandeleur's past history shows abruptnesses and intensities in his character which foreshadow developments to come: his early profligacy (in a day "when open profligacy was more the fashion than at present");[42] his withdrawal from the fashionable world after his marriage to Lady Margaret, daughter of a ducal house, and his devotion to his wife ("they traveled a good deal, they vegetated at their country place, but at home or abroad never seemed to be an hour apart"); then his wild grief at her death two years later followed by what seemed to be a shockingly calloused recovery of outward calm.

> Lady Margaret had no children, yet she lost her looks day by day. At the end of two years the blinds were down at Oakover, and its mistress was lying dead in the bedroom that had been decorated so beautifully to receive her as a bride. The sun rose and set more than once before Vandaleur could be persuaded to leave her body. A belated housemaid, creeping upstairs to bed, frightened out of her wits at any rate by the bare idea of death in the house heard his laughter ringing wild and shrill in that desolate chamber at the end of the corridor. . . . On the day of Lady Margaret's funeral, however, the mourners

> were surprised to see how bravely her husband bore his loss. In a few weeks the same people declared themselves shocked to hear that Mr. Vandeleur went about much as usual; in a few months, were surprised to learn he had retired from the world and gone into a monastery [gossip had distorted facts here; he went off for two years on his yacht]. 43

His interest in Nora at first is that of a man of middle age attracted by the freshness of youth and of the habitual roue whose proprietary habits make him prize what another man (in this story, Gerard) apparently possesses. In addition he finds satisfaction in matching experience against youth. Among his advantages over the younger man is "an inherent bonhomie and a frankness bordering on eccentricity" which fits with his habit of "good-humoured superiority in his intercourse with young ladies."[44] But mingled with this is a clear perception of the difference which age makes. So at an archery meet, "having a certain sense of the fitness of things"[45] he decides not to dance. "'No, hang it!' he said to himself that morning while shaving; 'after a fellow's forty it's time to shut up. I've had a queerish dance or two in my day, and I can't complain."[46] It is this awareness of the passage of time and the emptiness of his existence which intensifies, gradually, his interest in Nora. It is as the lonely man, not the worldling, that he presses his suit. (After the marriage he analyzes his motives to himself, deciding it is "to satisfy his longing to be loved," not to please his fancy or to minister to his vanity, which led him to marry

this bride, "the one woman of his whole life whom he had most desired to win." "He, the used-up, worn-out, grizzled old reprobate!").[47]

His suit splits sharply into two chains of action. The first, his scheming and plotting, can be justified dramatically only by attributing to him a streak of moral insensitiveness and persistent callousness which, although not impossible in the light of the contradictions of his character, takes an unreal and unconvincing theatrical turn when he rids himself of Gerard by securing him a commission which takes the young man to provincial duty, and then ruins Gerard in Nora's eyes by arranging for Fanny to compromise the young soldier. In the second, his actual suit, his shrewdness enables him to mix the attitude of the experienced and sympathetic man to whom Nora may turn in her distress with the attitude of the suppliant, a lonely man to whom a young woman can bring renewed youth and reawakened love, a mixture which both consoles and flatters. His skillful approach, in which there is enough genuine sincerity to convince Nora, weaves a net around her. At the archery meet, he leads Nora, who suffers from the heat, from the ballroom into the conservatory.

> "Now, sit down, while I get you some tea, and I'll give you leave to go and dance, directly I see more color in your face. I take good care of you, don't I?"

> "You do, indeed!" she answered gratefully; for the wounded anxious heart there was something both soothing and reassuring in the kindly manner and frank manly voice.
>
> A certain latent energy, a suppressed power, lurked about Vandeleur, essentially pleasing to women.[48]

When Norah goes to bed that night

> in all the darkness there was but one spark of light, in all the sorrow but one grain of consolation. Strangely enough, or rather, perhaps, according to the laws of sympathy and the force of association, that light, that solace seemed to identify themselves with the presence and companionship of Mr. Vandeleur.[49]

In later meetings, Vandeleur plays upon the theme of the elderly lover, narrating the story of his grandfather's devotion to his young wife, "an old man's love," he adds bitterly, "and therefore to be ridiculed and despised."[50]

This is the role he adopts when he proposes:

> Do not draw away from me. I will never persecute you. I do not care what becomes of me if I can only be sure that you are contented. . . .I shall always love you, and belong to you--like some savage old dog, who only acknowledges one owner--and you may kick me, or caress me, as you please.[51]

When they part, Norah has postponed her answer, "yet none the less did Norah Welby feel that, somehow against her will, she was fastened by a long heavy chain, and that the other end was held by John Vandeleur, Esq. of Oakover."[52]

During the honeymoon Norah's growing apathy casts a shadow over their relations; she does not sleep well and comes late to the breakfast table. It is after one of

these late risings that Vandeleur breaks the news of Ainslie's marriage to Fanny Draper, just received in the morning's post.

> "Something seems to amuse you," observed Norah quietly. "If it's no secret, suppose you tell it to me--I feel this morning as if a laugh would do me good."
>
> "Secret, my dear!" repeated Vandeleur. "It won't be a secret long. Certainly not, if newspapers and parish registers tell the truth. . . That young fool, Gerard Ainslie, has been and married a girl you remember down here, called Fanny Draper. A bold tawdry girl who used to be always hanging about Ripley Mill. Here's her letter. You can read it if you like."
>
> He looked very hard at Norah while he gave it, but his wife never moved an eyelash, taking it from his hand coldly and impenetrably as if it had been an egg or a teaspoon. With the same fixed face and impassive manner she read it through from end to end, and returned it, observing only in a perfectly unmoved voice--
>
> "I believe she loves him. It is an unfortunate marriage, but I hope he will be happy."
>
> Mrs. Vandeleur appeared, however, less amused than her husband; nor do I think she took this opportunity of enjoying the laugh she thought would do her so much good on that cold frosty morning at Oakover.[53]

Later at Homberg, Gerard's presence arouses and intensifies a strain in Vandeleur which approaches insanity. (Vandeleur, the reader finds out later, has suspected something of the sort working behind the violence of his emotions and has provided for Norah if the strain overcomes him; but this information is given long after the events described in the first part have taken place.) In a series of scenes between husband and wife, the tension of the

situation gradually removes the outward control which Vandeleur has always maintained (through it all Norah has thought of her husband as a perfect gentleman, whatever else he might be). To win Norah's love despite the presence of Gerard becomes an obsession with Vandeleur, and his only possible salvation.[54] As his failure to do this becomes more and more apparent, his increasing violence of temper kills Norah's genuine compassion for him.

> Why couldn't she love him? He was so kind and considerate; so anxious if she was ill, so forbearing when she was cross. Though ungovernable with others, he was always a gentleman to her. And she could scarce return him even common gratitude for his devotion. She forced herself to speak in terms of kindness and affection.[55]

The first really violent scene follows when Vandeleur discovers that Norah has pawned a bracelet he had given her, in order to help Gerard who, she finds out from Fanny is penniless. Vandeleur asks Norah for an explanation, and Norah tells him what she has done.

> You won't frighten me, Mr. Vandeleur. I should do the same thing again."
>
> She spoke boldly, but she was frightened none the less; and something told her, though she could not explain why, that the only way in which she controlled him was by keeping her eye fixed on his. It seemed to be with sheer passion that his features worked so painfully, and she sprang to her feet as he drew near, believing for a moment that he would have struck her with his clenched hand.
>
> The sudden movement broke the charm with which she had fixed him, and he burst forth in a torrent of reproaches, insult, and vehement abuse. He did not indeed threaten her with the personal violence she had

> feared, for even in these moments of uncontrollable anger Vandeleur retained some of the gentlemanlike instincts which had become second nature, but he spoke to her in language such as she had never heard before--such as, to do him justice, he had never spoken to a woman in his life.[56]

Norah retires to her room, locking herself in, and lies awake hearing her husband rating the servants and giving directions for an early start the next morning.

The next day during a visit to Heidleburg the two meet Dolly Egremont and Dandy Burton, friends of Gerard Ainslie, and the four gather at dinner that night where Dolly and Dandy witness another scene--the first public one--between Vandeleur and Norah. Norah defends Gerard against Vandeleur's sneers, and her defense arouses her husband's temper. That night, in the courtyard, Dolly and Dandy hear a "confused wrangle of voices, raised to an angry pitch" and catch Mrs. Vandeleur's tones in accents of "scorn, expostulation, the entreaty--lastly terror."

> The two listeners sprang across the court, and stood for a moment spellbound, beneath the windows of a brightly lighted apartment on the second floor. The rooms below were very lofty, and it was not easy to hear what went on within an upper chamber so high above the ground.
>
> Shadows passing rapidly to and fro, traversed the wall opposite the broad open casement.
>
> Hoarse, as with mad fury long suppressed, a whisper hissed down into the court--
>
> "By h--l, I will! I'll strangle you!"[57]

Dolly and Dandy leap across the court to enter the house and meet Mrs. Vandeleur "in her night-dress, her hair down, her

feet bare" at the entrance to the yard. She sobs for help.

> Even while she spoke they heard a rushing sound, followed by a dull dead bump on the paved surface of the court. Norah's strength failed her now. Already the hotel was alarmed. Lights were glancing, and servants running about in all directions. They covered Mrs. Vandeleur with a cloak, and carried her off unresisting, for she had fainted away.
>
> "It's all over!" said Burton, as the hand he lifted fell lifeless and inert across Vandeleur's bruised and mangled body, lying in a pool of blood. "Stark naked, too!" he added, looking down at the ghastly mass. "And to jump from such a height! He must have been as mad as Bedlam!"
>
> He must indeed! That poor terrified woman, now happily insensible, could have told them how her husband forced himself into her chamber, raving at her with a maniac's incoherent fury, tearing off article after article of clothing as he stormed; how he hunted her into the sitting-room, threatening her every moment with a horrible death; how she reached the door, in which the key, with its numeral attached, had been fortunately left on the outside, and turned it on him ere she fled; lastly, how to her dying day she would be haunted by the dire horror that this act of self-defence had caused him to leap through the window into the courtyard below![58]

The rest of the novel is pale anti-climax. Norah returns to London and lives in society, proud and aloof. Actually she is not yet free, for Vandeleur has survived the fall as a hopeless and imbecilic cripple. Before he dies his mind clears and he tells Norah of his responsibility for Gerard's ruin. He dies with the name of his first wife on his lips even as it had been in his mind during the days of his honeymoon with Norah.

The story of Gerard's marriage to Fanny Draper develops at the same time. Despite the theatricality of

the initial plot, there is genuine pathos in the situation of the attractive miller's daughter, with some talent as actress and mimic, attempting to make a lady of herself, proving more genuinely devoted and considerate than her gentleman husband, taught French by a philanderer who gives her the courteous attentions which her husband withholds, and making occasional solecisms and lapses of manner which are all the more noticeable and annoying because they are set against a background of only recently acquired polish.

Fanny had set her cap at Gerard at the instigation of Vandeleur and had followed him when he went on duty with his company. But when she nurses him through an injury incurred by a fall during a steeplechase, she falls in love with Gerard. Gerard, having heard of Norah's marriage to Vandeleur, marries her out of gratitude and loneliness. Attractive and shrewd, Fanny set to work making a lady of herself so that she will not shame her husband, and her natural dramatic talent enables her to make rapid progress. But other difficulties strain their relationship: Gerard has gone down hill, sold out of the army, gambled his way across the continent, sometimes flush, sometimes destitute. It is also clear to Fanny that he still thinks of Norah. When the reader next meets them in Homburg, they have now been married "well, long enough to be, perhaps, a little tired of it." Most difficult for Fanny to bear has been Gerard's thinly disguised contempt

for her self-education.

Typical of their domestic life is a scene which takes place shortly after their arrival in Homberg from Baden-Baden. Gerard is about to leave the apartment, and Fanny reminds him that it is too early for the tables and that he has never had luck before three o'clock. Gerard's comment is only that time must pass more quickly for her; she has an amusing book and is in luck. "I wish I could find anything that amused me." Hurt by the careless tone Fanny answers that time passes with her not because she is happy, but because she is employed--trying to speak French as well as Gerard's wife should. It is now Gerard's turn to be aggrieved at the implication that she is not happy as his wife. But their life has been a sad mistake all through; Gerard knew it from the start.

Fanny flashes out at this. She has known perfectly well how much Gerard gave up to marry her: Gerard has told her often enough--if not in words

> in tone, in manner, in a thousand little things a woman finds out too soon, even though she isn't a lady born! But I've tried hard, Gerard, hard--no, I'm not going to cry--to be good enough for you. Why I could scarcely sign my name, not properly, when I knew you first; and now there isn't a duchess or a countess as writes--I mean no lady in the land can write a better hand than mine. [Her lapses, including her "atrocious British pronunciation" of French grate on Gerard's ear all the more for her approximation of elegance.] The same with grammar, the same with music, the same with French, though some of the words does--do come very hard to remember when you want 'em. No, dear, I'm not a lady, I know, but I'm

> trying my best to be one; and a woman's whole heart is worth something after all, though she _is_ only a miller's daughter, as you'll find out one of these days when it's too late!59

Gerard, pettishly, doesn't want to find out anything but a good system for the _trente-et-quarante_ and cuts off an ungenerous remark about "one of his discoveries--." The unfinished remark rouses Fanny further; she reminds him that a miller's daughter has strong nerves and can hear the truth. One of his discoveries is what? Is "that a man is a d--d fool who does not know his mind, and marries the wrong woman with his eyes open." Fanny

> bent over the dictionary. . . and hunted earnestly, as it seemed, for some crabbed French word. It must have been a minute or two before she looked up, and her face was bright, her voice gay, though there was a hard metallic ring in it, while she observed--
>
> _Pievre!_ what can _pieuvre_ mean in a sentence like _this?_ Can you _explain it_, Gerard? I shall never make sense of it. I must wait for the count; he promised to come in and give me a lesson this afternoon."
>
> Gerard sneered.
>
> Tourbillon ought to be a good French master," said he, moving towards the door. "He must have brought a good many pupils to perfection, if all they say about him is true."
>
> "At least his is too kind and patient," she answered bitterly, to despite a woman for being ignorant, and working her heart out trying to learn."
>
> But it is doubtful if Gerard heard her. He was half-way downstairs by this time.60

Later when Gerard comes in completely penniless and despondent, Fanny forgets his harsh words in her fondness for

him, and Gerard, who had expected reproaches is touched and softened.

> "I don't care," she sobbed. . . ."I don't care--I don't care no more nor nothing. Never heed it, deary--never fear! I'll work my fingers for you to the bones, I will! Only, you'll be my own now, won't you? My own lad, as you've never been afore."[51]

Fanny's possessiveness and her lapses of speech lose her her chance. "to be thus taken possession of, while Norah was not two hundred yards off--and in such language, too!"[62]

Fanny demeans herself by borrowing money from Norah. Subjected to Gerard's suspicious taunts when Fanny refuses to tell him where the money has come from, Fanny accuses him of worshipping the very ground Norah walks on. "He covered his face with his hands. 'God knows I do!' wass all he murmured."[63] And Fanny gives up the battle, running away with the Count, an experienced philanderer who has perceived Fanny's sensitiveness to her position and has treated her calculatingly with all the deference which Gerard has withheld.

Footnotes CHAPTER XV

1. See General Bounce, Chap. v, Sec. 4, above. Also "Dandies," Chap. viii, Sec. 1, above.

2. M. or N., p. 118.

3. The same, p. 119.

4. The same, p. 121. The passage is one of the sort which gives substance to Sadleir's description of Whyte-Melville as the "well-spring of the cliche."

5. Contraband, p. 283.

6. A hint of the General is already given in General Bounce, and in Bones and I, pp. 207 ff. (the old officer who is the victim of the "vampire").

7. Satanella, p. 13.

8. The same, p. 17.

9. The same, p. 58.

10. The same, p. 67.

11. In Contraband, there are two lovers, one, Uncle Joseph, is the older lover who has difficulty keeping up with the young crowd, but he is more ridiculous than pathetic. Mr. Goldthred is the younger lover, whose simplicity, honesty, and natural tact and singleness of devotion win the widow. General St. Joseph in Satanella combines the situation in which Uncle Joseph is placed with the character of Mr. Goldthred.

12. Satanella, p. 49.

13. Cp. also Tilbury Nogo, Charley Wing of Good for Nothing, and, as well, Sir Henry Hallaton of Contraband and Lord St. Moritz of Black but Comely.

14. Satanella, p. 51.

15. The same, p. 45.

16. The same place.

17. The same work, p. 315.

18. The same, p. 281.

Footnotes Chapter XV (Continued)

19. The same, pp. 282-283.

20. In Sarchedon, for example. The leader of the Anakim tribe decides that Ishtar is not Sarchedon's wife, for if she were, Sarchedon would not have hesitated to make the trial which he was asked to make even though it put Ishtar in danger.

21. The only scenes of domestic felicity are those between King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette in Rosine. One other couple at least were happy, but even here there is a touch of acid in Whyte-Melville's remark: the Duke and Duchess in The Brookes of Bridlemere. "Of course the Duke did as he was told. Her word was law, as it ought to be, for theirs seemed a life-long romance" (p. 206). There is, evidently, one set of terms only according to which a marriage can be successful!

22. M. or N., pp. 241 ff.

23. Even the narrator in Good for Nothing, who hardly enters into the story itself, has had his unhappy love affair. See p. 322.

24. According to Fortescue, Whyte-Melville "cherished always a reverence" for women (work cited, p. 230). But it is woman in the abstract and woman idealized (in the historical novels especially), not woman as he finds her in Victorian society. -- Oddly enough, though he observes marital infelicity with some shrewdness, there is little record in his novels of the marriage mart and the practical sale of young women which one finds in other novelists (in Trollope, for example). While this is due to some extent to his complete, or practically complete, omission of mothers from the families which he portrays, it is also in part due, evidently, to a reluctance to face the system, for in those novels in which financial ruin is threatened if the daughter of the house does not marry the adventurer, he daughter escapes the predicament (The Interpreter, The Brookes of Bridlemere, and Contraband, especially, but see also The White Rose and M. or N.

25. To what extent such a picture can be called "evidence" is doubtful. A situation which is dramatically significant to a particular audience may be repeated in literature without any statistical relationship to actual life, of course.

26. Good for Nothing, p. 21.

27. Considering the dearth of mothers, it is natural that there should not be many children. Lewis, Victorian Novelists, p. 200, says that Whyte-Melville wrote of children with tenderness and understanding. It would be more nearly accurate to say that he does not write about children at all, the only exceptions being Dot Stoney of The Brookes of Bridlemere, George and Cerise in Cerise, and Jin's little boy in Contraband, and these hardly appear as characters in the story, Dot being the most fully developed. In the same place Lewis remarks that Whyte-Melville wrote of animals with an affection only equaled by that of Ouida. The present writer's generalizations about Ouida are based chiefly on Under Two Flags, but as far as Whyte-Melville is concerned, except for the Kate Coventries, his characters do not spend many words of affection on their horses, and he writes only twice about dogs ("Bold" in The Interpreter and "Tatters" in The Brookes of Bridlemere). Compare Henry Kingsley's love for dogs, shown in Ravenshoe and in other novels. Lewis's generalizations apparently are based on the assumption that The Brookes of Bridlemere is representative. Though the best novel, after the very best, to reveal Whyte-Melville at his happiest, it is not representative in the proportion and emphasis given to themes and characters.

28. The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 271. See above, Chap. xiii, Sec. 2, for the description of Lord Waywarden, Julia's father. When Lord Waywarden returns to the house to find out how Walter Brooke has made out in his proposal to Julia and in his interview with Lady Waywarden, he says to himself: "He's had a rough time of it with my lady . . . a very rough time of it, I'll be bound. Poor lad! He's never seen my lady with her back up. I shouldn't wonder if she astonished him a good deal. Now if Ju fancies this light dragoon. . . there's a nice piece of work cut out for me! Dear, dear, it's hard to have got old and heavy, and bald and slow, only to be bothered with women's dislike to the end of the chapter." (pp. 278-279).

29. Mills and Smedley also sketch heroines and heroes without one or the other parent although the present writer is not certain that this is done throughout their novels. Was the life expectancy of the Victorian mother so low that young men and women were frequently motherless?

30. The match-making mother is the only one of the chief types of character typical of the Silver Fork school (as they are listed by Rosa), who is not a prominent type in Whyte-Melville's novels.

31. Most of the scenes of comedy in the novels bear upon love-making or marriage; especially courtship and proposals. The other chief source of comedy is rumor and gossip in society.

32. Katerfelto, pp. 67 and 71-72.

33. Roy's Wife, p. 59.

34. The same, p. 66.

35. The same, p. 80.

36. The same, pp. 90-91.

37. The same, p. 105.

38. The same, p. 361.

39. Compare Lady Olivia of Good for Nothing (one more detail in which Uncle John resembles the earlier novel).

40. General St. Josephs in Satanella is sketched with equal success, but Satanella is a more successful novel because it is better unified, and concentrated, working out fully the implications of a single situation. St. Joseph's character, however, is so conceived as to make probing of his inward life unnecessary, and the tension of his character is simpler than that of Vandeleur's despite the superficial resemblance of situation. The inward struggle and tensions of the General can be revealed by portraying the outward manner with hints merely of depths beneath.

41. The White Rose, p. 27.

42. The same, p. 20.

43. The White Rose, pp. 20-21.

44. The same, p. 75.

Footnotes Chapter XV (Continued)

45. The White Rose, p. 73.

46. The same place.

47. The same, pp. 130-131.

48. The same, p. 75.

49. The same, p. 78.

50. The same, p. 106.

51. The same, p. 106.

52. The same, p. 107.

53. The same, p. 133.

54. The same, p. 140.

55. The same, p. 175.

56. The same, p. 181.

57. The same, p. 193.

58. The same, pp. 193-194.

59. The same, p. 144.

60. The same, pp. 144-145.

61. The same, p. 159.

62. The same place.

63 The same work, p. 167.

# CHAPTER XVI

## Other Aspects of the Novels

### Section (1) Religion

Whyte-Melville's passages on religion show a tendency to think in terms of sudden conversions (or re-conversions to the Gospel learned at the mother's knee),[1] and suggest influence by the Methodist revival or by the Evangelical movement within the Established Church, a movement which overlapped the later "High Church" movement and was already declining when the author began writing. In General Bounce, his third novel, when Gaston D'Orville is converted to Biblical religion and fires Bob Lacquers with the same idea, Lacquers protests, practically, "But what can I do, however willing I am? . . . An officer of hussars cannot be a Methodist preacher . . . . If I thought I had talents for it, and eloquence and learning, I'd sell out tomorrow, and go . . . as a missionary."[2] Other passages confirm this impression of Whyte-Melville's views. In Holmby House, despite his admiration for the gallantry with which Charles I meets his death, he cannot avoid commenting on the King's dependence on works other than the Bible.

> Charles sat at a small table on which lay a bible, a work of controversial divinity--for even at this extreme hour he could not take his religion pure from

> the fountain-head--and a casket containing a few small diamond ornaments and other jewels.[3]

Similarly he blames Lady Olivia in Good for Nothing for teaching religion by rote from the catechism of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England.[4] Together with this Biblical conception of Protestant religion, Whyte-Melville shares the extreme attitude toward Roman Catholicism. At the end of The Interpreter, Countess Rose begins a life of repentance, following her Catholic training. The author feels it necessary to ask the reader's tolerance:

> She is a Roman Catholic; do not therefore argue that her repentance may not avail. She has been a sinner --scarlet, if you will, of the deepest dye; do not therefore say that the door of mercy will be shut in her face.[5]

Nor is he above such allusions as

> the monks of old were anglers to a man, as the site of every ruined abbey and monastery vouches for, with its neighbour, the trout-stream--and, although inveterate bachelors, they were anything but callous to the charms of the other sex, "if ancient tales say true, nor wrong these holy men.[6]

Together with the Biblical strain is mixed the strain of muscular Christianity.[7] When Lexley in Uncle John is deserted by his wife, he brings to bear on his mind the principles that "had invigorated his body" when he had gone into training at College for "many a feat of strength and endurance."[8] Whyte-Melville takes advantage of the circumstance to remark that although "athletic training has been sneered at, muscular Christianity derided," he thinks

"There can be no question that he who has learned to gain mastery over the body has gone a long way towards gaining a mastery over the mind."[9] In Tilbury Nogo "Jo Baggs" as he was called at Eton, later the Rev. Josiah Bagshot, is a thorough sportsman, like Algernon Lexley in Uncle John. Josiah's sporting instincts and clerical conscience frequently conflict.

> How curious it is that so many of these athletic men, so many stalwart frames, gifted with extraordinary facility for all games and field-sports, and consequently imbued with a strong attachment for such pursuits, should have chosen the Church for their profession! Who shall appreciate the sacrifice which, with scarcely an exception, they make, one and all, for conscience's sake, in giving up these favourite pleasures, rather than furnish one censorious individual with occasion to say that there is aught in their conduct unbecoming a Christian minister? 10

Unlike Parson Dove[11] of Market Harborough, Jo Baggs has given up hunting, although he permits himself, like the Rev. Mr. Batts in Digby Grand, hunting and shooting, and, in emergency, to help the home team, cricket.[12]

Whyte-Melville's social toryism conflicts with his anti-catholic bias at several points. In Holmby House, for example, he portrays the Puritans as zealous fanatics (they are not gentlemen, clearly). In The Queen's Maries John Knox in an interview with Mary Stuart by no means comes off the victor, but it is the personal beauty and dignity of the maligned queen which triumphs and not her Catholicism. In Cerise two chief characters are priests: the Abbe Malletort is a scheming statesman, polished,

shrewd, and ironic;[13] Florian de Croix (Brother Ambrose) is unstable, weak, needing to rely upon a strong external force. But Cerise herself is a Catholic and Captain George as the son of Stuart supporters can only be tolerant of his wife's religion. (The response of the country neighbors to the pretty French Catholic wife of an English country gentleman is one of the difficulties which Cerise has to face.)

Of religion which is something other than a last resource to which man has recourse when broken by the world, Whyte-Melville says relatively little. Except for priests and clergymen and a handful of women in the early novels (Mary Delaval and Ada Latimer, for example), few characters in the novels are steadily religious or even religious at all until some catastrophe converts them. Passages like those describing Gaston D'Orville's conversion and the humbling of Jin Ross[14] recur throughout the novels. Yet, although religion is not introduced until the reed is broken, Whyte-Melville's passages about the Gospel religion as the final and only rock and comfort ring sincerely at several points.[15] The inconsistency in the rhythm of attention to religious motives in his characters would seem to give evidence more of an intellectual and imaginative weakness than of insincerity, for the same incapacity to integrate the different phases of life which he observes is apparent elsehwere (in his treatment of love and

marriage, for example).

Whyte-Melville's attitude towards Catholicism--and towards the Puseyite movement in his own church--is modified before the end of his writing career. By 1878 the High Church movement had made headway, and there was less intolerance toward the party itself and, beyond the Established Church, toward the Catholic Church. There had been several High Church clergymen given sympathetic treatment in the English novel by the 1860's and 1870's. But the change in Whyte-Melville's point of view is due less, probably, to High Church sympathies than to his political tendency and his enthusiasm for the Cavalier whether he follows the cause of the Stuarts or the Bourbons.

This change in attitude first becomes explicit in Uncle John although there the principal male characters, the Rev. Algernon Lexley, is a muscular Christian. Speaking of the devotion which the poor give to Annie Dennison when she works among them, Whyte-Melville says that the navvy or bricklayer

> enshrined her image in his breast, with something of the exalted and ennobling devotion paid by a knight of the Middle Ages to our Lady of Succour, when, laying lance in rest, he invoked her gracious help and favour at his need. 16

Later in the same novel, speaking of the Arthur of Tennyson's poem as the type of the "gentleman" he compares with the Round Table "every effort that has since been made to

instruct and benefit mankind, from the shaven Jesuit crucified in China to the frozen mariner stiff and stark on an iceberg with his face to the North Pole."[17] In the two historical novels which are set in the French court, Sister Louise and Rosine and in his last novel Black but Comely which includes as a main character a High Church clergyman, Whyte-Melville approaches an apology for the Catholic Church. Describing Mervyn Strange of Black but Comely, for example, he speaks of the "ideal monk of the Middle Ages, as far removed from the roystering friar of our English ballads as from the proud ambitious churchman of our English history."[18] Later he makes a partial defense of mediaeval Christianity:

> As in the different periods of historical warfare, he /Mervyn/ argued, different tactics and a different class of soldiers have been found necessary, so is it with that noblest of all campaigns, the struggle of good against evil, the conduct of which is entrusted to the Church Militant on earth. You wanted formerly a knight in armour impervious to the weak and clumsy projectiles of his time, as you wanted a priest in his vestments, whose sacred pomp and presumptive infallibility should impose on vulgar minds, untaught to reason. . . .

In Father Ignatius of Rosine, who is killed in a noble attempt to turn the mob back from Versailles, Whyte-Melville draws a flattering picture of the priest:

> The cure, single-minded, ascetic, and enthusiastic, was one of those devoted servants whom the Church of Rome numbers by thousands in her ranks. Father Ignatius, a name by which he was known in the high places of the Vatican, as among the poor peasantry of Rambouillet and Fontainebleau, had done much

> missionary work in savage regions, converting the heathen at no small risk of life and limb, carrying out his instructions with unquestioning fidelity, and serving, as he believed, the good cause with a total forgetfulness and abnegation of self. Blind obedience, unflagging zeal, were the two pillars of his creed; and when an order came from his superiors, he accepted the charge of a few rude woodcutters in a desolate forest of the provinces, neither more nor less willingly than he would have started at a moment's notice for Kamschatka or Japan. He was well read in the classics, thoroughly conversant with the history of his Church, a formidable disputant, a subtle controversialist, keen of perception, close in argument, fluent in language, pious enough for a martyr, wise enough for a cardinal; but he knew as little of a woman's nature as a boy of fifteen. 20

In Sister Louise, although deprecating the excesses to which de Bragelonne's fevered mind commits him when he becomes a Trappist monk, Whyte-Melville treats with sympathy the entrance of Louise de la Valliere into the convent and a life of ascetic penitence.[21]

But although sympathetic, the sportsman-Englishman[22] is careful to explain weaknesses in the Catholic religion. Near the end of Sister Louise he defines "true religion" and divides those who follow it into two groups, the stronger and the weaker.

> True religion, the sense of an inner being part from the body, and of a responsibility wholly unconnected with the world and the world's interests, acts variously on the various characters of mankind. In some--and these have, perhaps, arrived at the subtlest comprehension of its nature--it produces cheerfulness, confidence, and sustained energy in the affairs of daily life. . . .More, perhaps, from temperament than training, they are strong and of good courage in life and death, making the best of both worlds, in so far as to be content with this, while

> missionary work in savage regions, converting the heathen at no small risk of life and limb, carrying out his instructions with unquestioning fidelity, and serving, as he believed, the good cause with a total forgetfulness and abnegation of self. Blind obedience, unflagging zeal, were the two pillars of his creed; and when an order came from his superiors, he accepted the charge of a few rude woodcutters in a desolate forest of the Provinces, neither more nor less willingly than he would have started at a moment's notice for Jerusalem or Japan. He was well read in the classics, thoroughly conversant with the history of his Church, a formidable disputant, a subtle controversialist, keen of perception, clear in argument, fluent in language, pious enough for a martyr, wise enough for a cardinal; but he knew as little of a woman's nature as a boy of fifteen. 20

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> True religion, the sense of an inner being part from the body, and of a personality wholly unconnected with the world and the world's interests, acts variously on the various characters of mankind. In some—and these are, perhaps, endowed with the subtlest comprehension of its nature—it produces cheerfulness, confidence, and unabated energy in the affairs of daily life. . . . These, of course, from temperament than teaching, that are strong and of good courage in life and death, making the best of both worlds. In so far as he is content with this, while

> looking forward in faith and hope for the next. But there are many natures, sensitive, enthusiastic, strong in imagination, weak of will, to whom a little liberty is a dangerous concession, so that these be in extreme while they last, yet not of such long continuance as to become wearisome from repetition. .. . For these the way to heaven is indded a narrow path. . . . For such--peace, safety, and salvation are best secured within the walls of a monastery or a convent. . . . They are holy, they are earnest; they walk, no doubt, according to their lights; but it is well that these conscientious recluses are usually of too delicate a fibre to fill useful parts in the great social scheme, and that the noblest thinkers are also the busiest workers for the benefit of mankind. 23

Mervyn Strange, too, outgrows his High Church ideas, which are dealt a blow at the very beginning when his infatuation with Jane Lee makes him question the soundness of the ideal of celibacy. In the passage in which he justifies the priest as the soldier of the church during the middle ages, Mervyn goes on to decide that for the new age the "parson" (the parson of the established Church, at least) is the right soldier.

> He laid aside all those dandyisms of white cambric and black silk in which his youth had delighted. He intoned no longer through his nose, in sing-song, from the reading-desk, nor mubled below his breath at the altar. In his sermons he insisted less on the supremacy of a Church than the brotherhood of a community. 24

(And lest the dandy of the church be suspected, like the dandy of society, of effeminacy, Whyte-Melville hastens to add that Mervyn is a gentleman and if not a sportsman, yet not a weakling:

> He was no cricketeer nor oarsman; ignored boxing-gloves, foils, and dumb-bells; could neither have leapt a hurdle himself, nor ridden a horse over it

> to save his life. But he was man enough to study ten hours[25] on a stretch; and as for pluck, he had the courage of his opinions, a kind of valour more rare among youths than is generally supposed. 26

## Section (2) The Lower Classes

In the Whyte-Melvillean world of Belgravia and the country house, the upper middle class, landed gentry, and aristocracy mingle in the annual cycle of London social life and country house life. Only occasionally do the pressures from the middle class of trade and business and the lower class of the working man intrude.[27] Those who live beyond the limits of the West End become known, usually, only when they try to gain a foothold on the ladder of fashion, and there is occasional uneasiness about the climbers and adventurers, men not quite gentlemen and women who are slang and bad style. The few men who are in trade are gentlemen manque, and the women from families in trade are natural ladies who are admitted to fashionable life by marriage.

Equally rare are intrusions from the working classes. Domestics, to be sure, saucy French maids, especially, and occasional butlers who live within the influence of fashionable life and are part of it (though among the many omissions in the Whyte-Melville novel is the omnipresent valet, almost no scenes being set in male diggings, excepting military barracks). Few countrymen,

yeomen, or farmers appear, but there are numerous grooms and trainers of horses,[28] and on the hunting field whippers-in and earth-stoppers. Two types somewhat shady appear, the money-lender[29] and the horse-dealer (although the horse-dealer is frequently replaced by the scheming gentleman sportsman who rides to sell).[30]

Actually only three male characters of even secondary importance represent the lower classes:[31] Tom Blacke in General Bounce, Jem Batters in The Brookes of Bridlemere, and "Gentleman Jim" of M. or N. (Pierre in Rosine is a peasant and a countryman.) All three are petty London criminals who go down hill, frequenting gin mills, turning their hands to crimes which are more and more desperate: Tom Blacke is finally transported; Gentleman Jim is killed in his last venture; Jem Batters is saved by a meeting with Sir Archibald Brooke which recalls him to his senses (for Jem is of country origin).

> All the superstructure of knowing London worldliness and slang streetborn assurance melted away at the first glimpse of that kind, familiar face. The old feudal feeling, the sentiment of clanship, not quite extinct amongst the country peasantry of England, gained its accustomed ascendency, and, Jem never knew exactly how or why, he found himself standing in the middle of a crossing, with his hat off, asking Sir Archibald's pardon. 32

Both Tom Blacke and Gentleman Jim carry with them into ruin their faithful sweethearts. Gingham, who had been Blanche Kettering's maid, marries Tom and bears him a child. But Tom's career of crime and his growing sullen-

ness and indifference drive Gingham to drink, too, and to further despair when her neglect is responsible for the illness and death of their child. (The sight of the broken mother following the coffin of her child through the city streets to a pauper's grave reminds Mary Delaval that she is not the only unfortunate.) Dorothea, similarly neglected, attempts suicide, finally goes mad when Gentleman Jim is killed in the final scene. The gin-palace and the dingy room[33] are the only physical settings in which these characters appear.

But although Whyte-Melville does not introduce "lower class" characters into the novels (for which a lack of personal observation would be sufficient explanation),[34] he does make evident a definable attitude toward the lower classes in the mass. The attitude is given rather fully in General Bounce which makes more of the degradation of city poverty, in the lives of Tom Blacke and Gingham, than does the later M. or N. (perhaps because it is nearer in time to the popular influence of Dickens than is M. or N.). His attitude is clearly dependent upon his idealization of the gentleman and the cavalier, for the values which he prizes are dependent upon a stable society and a marked distinction of upper from lower class.[35] One element in his conception of society is the responsibility for and duty toward the lower classes which must be assumed by the upper classes, a kind of noblesse oblige which at its best mass and indifference drive Vingie to drink, too, and to further despair when they neglect their responsibility for the illness and death of their child. (The sight of the broken woman following the coffin of her child through the city streets is a pageant which reminds very forcibly that she is not the only unfortunate.) Dorothea, similarly neglected, attempts suicide, finally goes mad when Englishman Jim is killed in the final scene. The gin-palace and the dingy room[53] are the only physical settings in which these characters appear.

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Both attitudes are expressed in General Bounce. His description of the lower classes in the city after a eulogy of the farm-laborer, shows the limitation of his conception of social problems: among the "sons of toil in town,"

> all enjoyment is artificial, all pleasure must be paid for. . . . What pleasaure can they have but those of the senses? Where have they to go for relaxation but to the gin-shop? What inducement have they to raise themselves above the level of the beasts which perish?[37]

He goes on to explain the importance of a contented working class in the passage immediately following:

> Honour to those who are working to provide intellectual amusements for the masses, and that education of the soul which places man above the circumstances by which he is surrounded! Much has been done, and much is still left to do. 38

His solution assumes no radical change in the social structure, hardly hints that anything is wrong at the base of Victorian English society:

> Let us, every man, put his shoulder to the wheel--let each, in his own circle, be it small or great, do all in his power for those beneath him--beneath him but in the accident of station, brothers in all besides--live and let live--stretch out a helping hand to all who need it--treat every man as one who has an immortal soul--and though "they shall never cease out of the land," yet will their wants be known and their hardships alleviated, and the fairest spirit of heaven--angelic Charity--shall spread her wings widest and warmest in London for the poor. 39

This is the only solution which Whyte-Melville gives. Annie Dennison in Uncle John[40] working among the poor in Lexley's city parish, sets about first to reduce drunkenness. Successful in this ("A drunken man became a rarity; a riotous one an impossibility"),[41] Annie sets herself to render the wives tidy and clean, then having reformed the husbands and improved the homes, she undertakes to educate the children, a project interrupted by the return of Horace Maxwell from Vienna, and her marriage shortly after.

His fear of revolution is expressed early, in The Interpreter where he comments on the scene in which Vere Egerton witnesses the flogging of a peasant by an Austrian officer:

> The peasants' faces actually became convulsed with rage, their voices shook with fury, and threats and maledictions were poured on their masters enough to make one's very blood run cold. If ever they do get the upper hand, woe to the oppressor! There is nothing on earth so fearful as a Jacquerie. God forbid this fair land should ever see one. 42

In one of his last books, Rosine, the fear is given even more emphatic statement, suggesting that since General Bounce he has become more fully aware of a restlessness in society. In General Bounce he had spoken of the people as "waves" which must "be taught to leap ever upwards, to fling their separate crests towards the sky." The continuation of the passage shows that he considers individual education a kind of dividing of the people which will prevent their massing together: "for if the tempest should arise, and they should come surging on in one gigantic volume [i.e., instead of flinging their crests to the sky separately], they will make a clear breach wherever the embankment happens to be weakest; and who shall withstand their force?"[43] In Rosine he adds:

> There is a downward impetus in its progress, that those who set a revolution in motion are powerless to arrest. So long as the agitator can make fresh promises, originate fresh changes, and incite to fresh outrage, so long is he adored by an unreasoning and enthusiastic crowd. . . .Ambition, cunning, and reckless audacity, are spells powerful enough in modern times to raise a devil, that human wisdom and experience prove helpless to send back to his place till he has far exceeded his mission and worked his own wicket will rejoicing, with supreme contempt for the remonstrances of his lord.[44]

In Rosine, too, speaking in his own person as narrator, he looks backward with condemnation at the French Revolution.[45] Without going so far as to consider the divine right of kings, he still insists upon a hierarchical conception of justice. When "daring casuists, smarting

under injustice and looking in vain for bread" questioned the divine right of kings, the subject was found to bear enlargement. The "converse theories. . . proposing an artificial equality of all mankind" which were spreading far and wide, however, were "equally irrational."[46]

Another comment which he makes explains why many of the upper class were able to accept the steadily increasing intrusion of the middle class with relative equanimity. The middle classes, he explains, formed a barrier to the revolution because they had much to lose, nothing to gain, and did not want a change. His perception that the middle class is an ally of the aristocracy against revolution leads him to a eulogy of a whole group of people whom he hardly considers in the society novels: the tradesmen of Paris were

> the back-bone of its social framework, the honest fathers of families and respectable shopkeepers, who have furnished from time immemorial subjects of laughter to the stage, figures of fun for the pencil. Why a man must necessarily be ridiculous because he is a kind parent, a faithful husband, and a useful member of society, is a question that might well be asked in a more or less advanced state of civilisation than our own.[47]

## Section (3) National Types

### (a) Stock Types

Given Whyte-Melville's family background and his concern with the Vavalier tradition, one might expect to find more frequent introduction of Scotsmen as characters

in the novels and more frequent allusions to Scottish tradition.[48] But except for the anecdotes in Scotland and the Moors (the Kirk minister on the boat tells a dialect story as does the native Highlander who guides the party on a deer hunt) and for the introduction of the shrewd Doctor Blair in The Brookes of Bridlemere there are no dialect characters in the novels. The historical novel The Queen's Maries which centers on the character of Mary Stuart herself is the only Scottish novel. Without the affectations of the character in James Grant's novel, Whyte-Melville seems to have been thoroughly Anglicized.[49]

Other types to appear in the novel are the stock characters of fiction of the period. In Digby Grand and Tilbury Nogo the stock Irish major and French count appear, lifted without modification or special skill from the Lever tradition. Both types occur again before the series of novels is completed. In Contraband an Irishman is introduced briefly, long enough to prevent Frank Vanguard from meeting Helen, when his reckless driving causes an accident in a hack. "Lord Kilgarron was a thorough Irishman, devoted to sport, reckless of danger, and possessing the knack, indigenous to his countrymen, of hitting off graphic description by a happy blunder."[50] In Rosine, the tale of the French revolution, another Irish adventurer, Fitzgerald, amazes and puzzles the French court by

> "his good looks, high spirits, feats of personal daring. . . .his joviality with men, his politeness to women, his humorous and original conversation--

in the novels and more frequent allusions to Scottish tradition.18 But except for the anecdotes in Scotland and the Moors (the fine minister on the [illegible] being a dialect story as does the native Highlander who guides the party on a deer hunt) and for the interpretation of the ancient Gaelic plaint in The Brookes of Bridlemere there are no dialect characters in the novels. The historical novel The Queen's Maries which centers on the character of Mary Stuart herself is the only Scottish novel. Without the affectations of the character in James Grant's novel, Whyte-Melville seems to have been thoroughly Anglicised.19

Other types to appear in the novel are the stock characters of fiction of the period. In Digby Grand and Tilbury Nogo the stock Irish major and French count appear, lifted without modification or special skill from the larger tradition. Both types recur again before the series of novels is completed. In Contraband an Irishman is introduced briefly, long enough to prevent Frank Vanguard from meeting Julia, when his reckless driving causes an accident in a lane. "Lord Killgorran was a thorough Irishman, devoted to sport, reckless of danger, and possessing the knack, indigenous to his countrymen, of hitting off graphic description by a happy blunder."20 In Rosine, the tale of the French revolution, another Irish adventurer, Fitz-gerald, amuses and puzzles the French court by

> 'his good looks, high spirits, feats of personal daring . . . his joviality with men, his politeness to women, his humorous and original conversatio--

> above all, by the magnificence of his surroundings, and an unbridled expenditure, that excited the curiosity of royalty itself." 51

But he plays only a brief role in the novel. In one other novel, Satanella, Whyte-Melville takes the reader to Ireland for hunting and a steeplechase and introduces him to Lord Macormac and Lady Mary and their beautiful daughter Norah. Lord Macormac is an idealized picture of an Irish gentleman, and several passages of the novel are given over to hyperbolic praise of the Irish character and Irish beauty.[52]

The French count also, introduced with the Irishman in the first two novels, is repeated in The White Rose in a conventional picture but with greater success and a lighter touch. Though a philanderer, the Count--a Frenchman and therefore exempt from the moral censure which would be the due of an Englishman--is amiable and amusing. Early in the novel he has provided Fanny with an escape from Gerard Ainslie's domestic cruelties. Later, in England, the Count meets Dolly who is seeking information about Fanny Ainslie in the hope that she is dead and that Gerard is free to marry Norah. The Count, much to Dolly's surprise, repeats the details of Gerard's career of gambling on the continent.

> "How did you learn all this?" gasped Dolly in the plenitude of his astonishment.
>
> The Count threw the end of his cigarette into the fireplace.
>
> "C'est tout simple!" said he composedly. "Parbleu, C'est moi qui l'a enlevee." 53

Dolly's first indignant response is succeeded by the "more cosmopolitan reflection that the Frenchman had really conferred on Gerard Ainslie a very important service." The Count in answer to his eager question explains that poor "Fanchon," as he called her, died--after leaving him as she had left her husband.

> The only difference was that she did not care for him, while to me she was devoted--yes, devoted! . . .Even at this distance of time I can recall the graceful pose in which she would stand at her window watching for my return, with her showers of light brown hair. Stay! No; that could not be Madame Enslee--I am confusing her with some of the others. Pardon, my dear Egremont, these souvenirs of the heart are apt to distract a man in the head. 54

But the Count has seen her tomb, he reassures Dolly, and has hung immortelles upon it. Dolly leaves satisfied. Later, alone, about to leave the apartment, however, the Count pauses, uncertain.

> "Tiens!" said the count, putting his hand to his forehead, and trying hard to unravel the entanglement of memories it contained. "Have I deceived myself after all? Was it the English Fanchon whose grave I watered with my tears at Brussels, or that tall girl from Innspruck, or the Alsatian blonde? How stupid I am! Fanchon! Fanchon! It is a vile habit of mine to call every woman with whom I have relations by that endearing name. It is convenient at first, no doubt; but see what confusion it makes in the end. H'importe! Fanchon, or Finette, or Fleur-de-lis, or Feufollet, it makes little difference; the immortelles would have been withered by this time, all the same!" 55

Two other types are occasionally introduced in the novels, the Austrian or Hungarian and the American. Count Victor de Rohan of The Interpreter is the most

elaborately and romantically described character from central Europe, but others are introduced, particularly women,[56] in passing, at several points. (Austrian-English relationships were close during the middle Victorian period, an alliance dictated apparently by mutual conservatism. English adventurers, for example, frequently fought with the Austrians against the Italians,[57] and the Austrians in turn admired the English.)[58] Whyte-Melville's passages about Americans are carefully restricted and there are no full-length portraits, the nearest to one being the description of Squire Sauley who outwits Digby Grand and the Colonel in a horse race in Canada, and indulges in Americanism such as his comment on hearing of Digby Grand's Halverly Hall that it was "a considerable clearin'" and his statement that he had "a pretty loud notion 'twas not in the Britishers to tree him, not nohow they could fix it."[59] (Fanny Draper in The White Rose after making her start as an actress in New York, presumably reflects her American experiences when she exclaims to Count Tourbillon, "You whip creation, Count! . . . . You do indeed.")[60] Two of the adventurers in the novels (Contraband and Uncle John)[61] have wandered in the States and have fought for the South ("somehow, every soldier-adventurer concerned in that war seems to have been a Southerner").[62] By the 1870's, however, America has come closer, and American women were making successes in London society which aroused the envy

of their British sisters. In Roy's Wife (1878) Lady Jane de Banier in conversation with Mr. Roy mentions the Sphinx.

> Now the Sphinx, so called from her magnificent bust, classical features, and exceeding taciturnity, was a young lady recently arrived in London from the United States.
>
> For more than a year it had been the fashion to admire everything American; and the Sphinx found a series of triumphs waiting for her in Belgravia that she never could have achieved in New York. 63

In Black but Comely, published a year later, another American beauty is in competition with Mrs. Stripwell.

> The discussion was on no less important a subject than that of dress as worn at the races by two rival beauties, one of whom was Mrs. Stripwell herself, the other a fair importation from New York, with the most charming little nose ever employed as an organ of speech. 64

The nasal American has an advantage over Mrs. Stripwell in that her dress comes from Paris and is a trifle dearer even than that of the Englishwoman.

### (b) Black but Comely

More than these people, it is the gipsy whom Whyte-Melville develops as central characters, especially in Katerfelto and Black but Comely.[65] Whyte-Melville's fashionable world saw gipsies chiefly at the race tracks where they "dukkered,"[66] told fortunes, when the dandies crossed their palms with silver. Both Tilbury Nogo[67] and Kate Coventry[68] are approached by gipsies at the race tracks, and in Black but Comely two of the three gypsy

scenes are race-track scenes. The third scene is reproduced from Katerfelto, a scene in a gipsy camp. The talk about Romany girls who marry "giorgios" and are revenged by the tribe,[69] the scattered references to gypsy names,[70] and the vagabond petulancies of young gipsy lovers like Fin Cooper and Jericho Lee appear conventional enough, and Whyte-Melville had a long tradition of gypsy life in the nineteenth century novel to draw upon. Although George Borrow particularly had written of the gypsy, Romany characters had appeared in many other works,[71] in the fiction of Ainsworth[72] and Lytton,[73] for example. Katerfelto introduces a young hero who has to turn highwayman and who is aided by the gypsies as was Dick Turpin in Ainsworth's Rockwood (which also includes a love affair between a girogio and a gypsy girl).[74] The plot of a gypsy girl's self-sacrifice in the interest of her girogio lover, which appears in Katerfelto, was a familiar one.[75] A historian of the literature of roguery mentions as part of the tradition of gypsy life in the Victorian novel Borrow's hypocritical Man in Black and the metamorphosis of this character in a novel by George S. Phillips[76] (1864, eleven years before Katerfelto) into a bigoted Anglican rector; so there is tradition even for Parson Gale.

Whyte-Melville introduces the gypsy theme as early as The Interpreter[77] in which a handsome gypsy queen has been protected as a young girl from the insults of a

city mob by the aristocrat, Victor de Rohan's father, she utters fateful prophecies about Victor, to whom she has appointed herself a protectress. Near the end of the book she attempts in vain to reach Victor and warn him of impending disaster. Her foot-face against time through Austrian mountains is repeated both in Katerfelto (Thyra's attempt in winter to reach John Garnet before Jericho Lee and Parson Gale capture him) and in Black but Comely (Jane's attempt to reach the race track in order to reconcile herself with Forward James before the disastrous race begins), but with diminishing melodrama.[78] Katerfelto and Black but Comely both include scenes in the gypsy camp[79] in which the gypsy girl herself is virtually a prisoner though a favored one (Jane Lee in Black but Comely is, in fact, the daughter of the "patron" and so the princess of the band), but in Black but Comely the gypsy girl succeeds in winning her giorgio lover and the gypsy band itself dissolves when the leader is imprisoned for brawling. Katerfelto romanticizes the gypsy characters; Black but Comely disperses them and changes them into rough drunken cabmen and mean city thieves, and the gypsy girl herself, though her rise has been due to her primitive drive and though she prides herself on being a gypsy "pur sang,"[80] humbly repents her wrong doings and marries an Anglican clergyman.

Whyte-Melville's novel about the gypsy girl who makes her way into society finally to conform to the Victorian ethic and to marry respectably is an interesting

consequence of his treatment of adventuresses in Contraband and Satanella. For despite the apparent venturesomeness of Whyte-Melville's choice of heroines, the more daring he makes them, the more he isolates them from Anglo-Saxon normality, as if to reassure the reader that he does not envisage an Englishwoman pur sang involved in such irregularities. They are all dark-haired and dark-eyed (except Laura of Uncle John who has golden brown hair and is more the Grecian-Whyte-Melvillean Grecian--type, Junoesque, and although proud and capable of managing herself in the world already chastened by circumstance and submissive to it). In sequence these women with graceful figures, "lithe as a panther's"[81] or "undulating like the serpent"[82] become more and more exotic. Blanche Douglas, the second, shares with her gypsy successors, a Southern European richness:

> No cosmetics. . . .could have imitated her deep rich tints, glowing like those of the black-browed beauties one sees in Southern Europe, as if the blood ran crimson beneath her skin--as if she, too, had caught warmth and vitality from their generous climate and their sunny smiling skies. 83

Finally, the last heroine is actually a gypsy and makes her way in London society as an Italian noblewoman (nee Beltenbrosa).

Footnotes CHAPTER XV

1. But there is only one death bed conversion in the novels, that of Delancy in Uncle John, p. 326. In several of the novels a dramatic point is made of the moment when a character is on the point of conversion and prayer but passes it by: General Bounce, Chap. xxi; Good for Nothing, Chap. xxix; The White Rose, p. 115. The women, of course, pray more easily and more often than the men, even Jane Lee in Black but Comely, p. 229.

2. General Bounce, p. 251.

3. Holmby House, p. 388.

4. Good for Nothing, p. 163. Compare though, Black but Comely, p. 353, some years later in which he speaks of the "prayers of our beautiful "Liturgy."

5. The Interpreter, p. 371.

6. Tilbury Nogo, p. 223.

7. There is only one scholar-clergyman in the novels, Mr. Welby, Norah's father in The White Rose, a Greek scholar.

8. Uncle John, p. 313.

9. The same place.

10. Tilbury Nogo, p. 165.

11. Among the well-known fox-hunting parsons of the middle of the century were Jack Russell and the Rev. Cecil Lagard. The latter was the original of Whyte-Melville's Parson Dove according to Chalmers, work cited, p. 26.

12. For other references to sporting or cricket-playing parsons, see Bones and I, pp. 294-295 and Black but Comely, p. 314.

13. Assarac in Sarchedon is similarly conceived and there is little question but that Whyte-Melville had the Catholic Church in mind and in the Jewish captive who preaches a pure religion of the spirit to Assarac, Protestanism. See p. 136; also Chap. xii. Assarac the high priest of Baal has a perception of higher religion and

though worship is centered on objects which convey an idea of the "reproductive power of nature," he also adores the stars and beyond them the power that gives them light (p. 288). In the procession is carried the circle of gold encompassing a wheel of wings, "the symbolic and mystic representation of some power that must yet be superior even to Fate, some abstract essence, some intelligence infinite, inconceivable" (p. 137).

14. See above, Chap. viii, Sec. 1, and also Chap. xii, Section 1.

15. It is difficult to estimate the "sincerity" of such passages considering the conventionality of such phrasing and the customary inclusion of pious sentiment in popular fiction of the period. But there is no reason to suspect deliberate insincerity; rather, the tone of the novels throughout suggests an honest and sincere mind which is limited in expression to the cliche, at least during the reflective passages.

16. Uncle John, p. 354.

17. The same, p. 429.

18. Black but Comely, p. 16.

19. Rosine, p. 214.

20. The same place.

21. See Digby Grand and The Interpreter for references to the woman who leaves the convent to become reunited with her lover and who then dies. In The Queen's Maries, Mary Hamilton is to enter the convent after the death of Chastelar, but dies before it is time to take her vows. In Bones and I, p. 336, Guenevere is painted as the penitent who enters the convent.

22. But at no point does Whyte-Melville come to the absurdity of Charles Kingsley, particularly in Westward Ho. For example, the clergyman who says frankly that his "business is not merely to smuggle sinful souls up the back stairs into heaven, but to make men good Christians by making them good men, good gentlemen, and good Englishmen." (Cp. Henry Kingsley's Arthur Silcote; Henry

Kingsley himself, though, is expressedly conscious of the fact that the conception of the gentleman seem to be more basic to Arthur than that of the Christian.) Or the scene in which Amyas tells Rose's father that she was burned at the stake by Spanish inquisitors. Amyas adds that she died like a saint. To the Charles-Kingsleyan father this is incomplete praise: "'Yes, sir!' answered the old man, with a proud smile; 'she had the right English blood in her, I doubt not; and showed it to the last.'" Or the reflection of the high church clergyman who has come through the cholera plague and has modified his views suitably (Two Years Ago, Chap. xix): "God is perfectly powerful and infinitely of use; and perfectly good, because he delights utterly and always in being of use; and that, therefore, we can become like God. . . only in proportion as we become of use . . . . At last I saw that all life, all devotion, all pity, were only worthy anything, only Divine, and God-like and God-beloved, as they were means to that end--to be of use." (His listener responds to this Rotarian definition with "It is a noble thought, Headley.")

27. Though they may hover in the background. Charles Kettering of General Bounce and Captain Lovell of Kate Coventry have trade connections. But this touch of satire, possibly added with Thackeray's Osbornes of Vanity Fair in mind is dropped in the later novels.

28. Among them the most interesting character besides the fashionable groom (for example, Mr. Tiptop, the Honourable Crasher's groom, and the equally fashionable groom of Miss Merlin in Inside the Bar), is the gnarled old man like Ike the earth-stopper in Tilbury Nogo (see pp. 232 ff.) and Red Rube the deer harborer in Katerfelto (see pp. 174 and 178. The groom who rides his gentleman's second horse in the hunt itself does not appear in Whyte-Melville but is mentioned in Surtees (Analysis of the Hunting Field, Chap. xl) and is given prominent place in Sassoon's Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man.

29. See, for example, Mr. Shadrach in Digby Grand, Mr. Multiple in The Brookes of Bridlemere, and Katerfelto himself.

30. Tilbury Nogo, p. 259; Market Harborough, Chap. xvi; M. or N., p. 115; Inside the Bar, p. 278; and Digby Grand, pp. 97-98.

31. If governesses, music mistresses, and actresses are included, there are more women in this class than men.

32. The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 370.

33. See M. or N., pp. 145-146, for example, for the gin palace, and Contraband, Chap. xxvi, for the tenement room.

34. A few others who appear more or less briefly: "King Nap," in The Interpreter; the Loders (country poor) in Uncle John; Susan and Caroline (women of the street) in Black but Comely; Fighting Jack (prize-fighter, but a gypsy "patron" as well) in Black but Comely; the miller in The White Rose; and "Nobbler King" in The Brookes of Bridlemere, who like Gentleman Jim of M. or N. is a London thief of Protean disguises.

35. An interesting sequence occurs in Henry Kingsley's Ravenshoe (see especially Chap. xxvii): Charles, the gentleman who finds that he is not the gentleman he has been reared, after all, takes service as groom to Lt. Hornby, and finds in fidelity to his master a place in the world of gentlemen among whom he has been educated.

36. The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 306. See also the passage quoted just above from The Brookes of Bridlemere, p. 370.

37. General Bounce, pp. 120-121. The chapter is entitled "Want."

38. The same, p. 121.

39. The same place.

40. Uncle John, pp. 358 ff.

41. The same, p. 357.

42. The Interpreter, p. 8.

43. General Bounce, p. 121.

44. Rosine, p. 389.

45. Lawrence in Guy Livingstone (Chap. xxi) expresses a similar sentiment at an earlier date: "with

the fear of the Divine Voice of the People before my eyes, as is but fitting in these equalizing days, when territories, the title to which is possession immemorial, are being plucked away acre by acre, and hereditary privileges mined one by one."

46. Rosine, p. 220.

47. The same, pp. 300-301.

48. Cp. for example, Whyte-Melville's fellow Scot, James Grant, who emphasizes the Scotsman and the Scottish tradition.

49. See above, Chap. v, Sec. 3, the discussion of Scotland and the Moors. To be sure the poet whom he quotes the most often (Byron) was a Scotsman, but equally Anglicized.

50. Contraband, p. 174. Lord Kilgarron's remark which gave rise to this comment was "Wouldn't she have won the Garrison Cup at the Curragh last year as sure as ever she was, only the fools ran the race at a walk, and never began at all till the finish."

51. Rosine, p. 254.

52. Satanella, pp. 102-103 and 155-156.

53. The White Rose, p. 302.

54. The same place.

55. The same, pp. 303-304.

56. Victor's sister Valerie marries an Englishman. Jack Hillingdon in Digby Grand had an affair with a Viennese. Vere Egerton's mother in The Interpreter and Ada Latimer's mother in Good for Nothing were Viennese.

57. Trollope was offered a commission in the Austrian army and nearly took it (Sadleir, Trollope, p. 109). References to the Austrian campaigns are frequent in the Victorian novel. In Henry Kingsley's Silcote of Silcotes, Tom Silcote became a colonel in the Austrian army. Smedley (Harry Coverdale's Courtship, Chap. lv) mentions an Englishman who has fought with the Austrians,

and Lewis Arundel's father had been with their forces (Lewis Arundel, Chap. xii). Lawrence (Guy Livingstone, Chap. x) recounts an anecdote about an Austrian count, and Lord Mohun in the same novel had taken service with the Austrians. It was the Crown Princess of Austria who set the fashion in England, 1878, by riding to the hounds (Apsley, work cited, p. 374).

58. Whyte-Melville makes a point in The Interpreter (p. 8) of the Austrian who is a great admirer of the English.

59. Digby Grand, pp. 40-41.

60. The White Rose, p. 328.

61. See Contraband, pp. 81 and 186, and Uncle John, p. 227.

62. Contraband, p. 81.

63. Roy's Wife, 1878, p. 191.

64. Black but Comely, p. 171.

65. Like other phrases which catch Whyte-Melville's fancy, "black but comely" does service in more than one novel. In Cerise it heads the chapter (Chap. xxxi) in which the beautiful negress Fleurette is saved from a flogging by the command of Cerise, for whom Fleurette later sacrifices her life. In Katerfelto it is Fin's tribute (p. 215) to the beauty of the gypsy girl who discards him in unrequited love for a giorgio lover. And finally it emerges as the title of the last novel, Black but Comely (see especially, p. 87).

66. For example the gypsies at the race tracks in Mills Our Country, I, Chap. xvii; in Henry Kingsley's Geoffrey Hamlyn, one of the chief characters is the son of a gypsy woman, who at one point meets him at the race tracks.

67. Tilbury Nogo, p. 69.

68. Kate Coventry, p. 57.

69. See Black but Comely, p. 111.

70. For example, Black but Comely, pp. 87, 97, 113, and 116.

71. For example, the same work, p. 110.

72. Rookwood.

73. Bulwer had actually spent a period wandering with the gypsies (Lovett and Hughes, work cited, p. 200).

74. F. W. Chandler, The Literature of Roguery, 1907, II, 361 and 363. Luke Bradley is engaged to a gypsy girl at the time that he discovers he is by right Sir Luke Rookwood.

75. Chandler speaks of Katerfelto as "reviving" this familiar plot (II, Chap. xii, Sec. 2).

76. The Gypsies of Dane's Dyke (See Chandler, work cited, II, Chap. xii, Sec. ii). Chandler does not point out a parallel between this and Katerfelto.

77. See particularly pp. 163 ff; also Chap. v.

78. The race to save a man from death, run by a woman who for one reason or another cannot hope for the love of the man who is in danger is a commonplace of sentimental melodrama. A convenient example from Whyte-Melville's own period is the race of the cigarette girl in Ouida's Under Two Flags, to save Bertie Cecil.

79. Black but Comely, Chap. xvi.

80. The same work, p. 266.

81. Contraband, p. 12.

82. Satanella, p. 11.

83. The same, p. 12.

# CHAPTER XVII

## Some Literary Relationships

### Section (1) Allusions in the Novels

Although Whyte-Melville did not cultivate literary men and women, and kept pretty well silent about his craft,[1] there are allusions scattered through the novels which indicate some awareness of the trends in prose fiction. In Tilbury Nogo, the second novel, for example, there are allusions to Apperly[2] ("the best sporting writer of the day"), Byron[3] (the "poet who describes life as it is"), Dickens[4] (to Mr. Weller of Pickwick Papers), Hook[5] (to Daly, the practical joker of Gilbert Gurney), Lever[6] (to Major Monsoon of Charles O'Malley), Charles Mathews,[7] the playwright (from whose Used Up he quotes elsewhere), Marryat[8] (to Peter Simple), Tom Moore,[9] Scott[10] (to Ivanhoe), and Surtees[11] (to Mr. Jorrocks "that most immortal of Nimrods"). The list is a fair representation of influences at work, at the time, on Whyte-Melville.[12]

Two novels in particular contain comment on the writing of fiction, and it is interesting to notice that both are transitional novels, marking points at which, judging from internal evidence, he was in the process of making a decision about his work. The first one of these

is General Bounce which marks the point at which he broadens his scope (permanently) to include "society," making sport, which had been the chief subject in the first two novels, only one of the elements in his books. His decision to include fashionable society was made evidently in the teeth of a decline of interest in the novel about aristocratic life, for he records changes in this fashion in the character of Lord Mt. Helicon, the literary nobleman. Mt. Helicon has difficulty with his publisher when he tries to sell him a translation of the Medea. Lord Mt. Helicon, his publisher tells him, has overwritten himself lately.

> Your 'Broadsides from the Baltic' were excellent--telling, clever, and eloquent; but you'll excuse me --you were incorrect in your statistics and mistaken in your facts. Then your last novel, 'Captain Flash; or, the Modern Grandisons,' was dead loss to us--lively work--well reviewed--but it didn't sell. In these days people don't care to go behind the scenes for a peep at aristocratic ruffians and chivalrous black-legs--no, what we want is something original--hot and strong, my lord, and lots of nature. 13

Whyte-Melville hardly offered the public something "hot and strong," but he did put behind him the tradition of Theodore Hook. In another passage, Whyte-Melville casually discusses problems of plotting. In style and manner the passage is characteristic enough of his reflective sequences to be quoted for its representativeness:

> We do not think Frank has enjoyed his day's pleasure, any more than Mary Delaval. How few people do, could we but peep into their heart of hearts! Here are two at least of that gay throng,

> in whom the shaft is rankling, and all this discomfort and anxiety exists, because, forsooth, people never understand each other in time. We think it is in one of Rousseau's novels that the catastrophe is continually being postponed because the heroine invariably becomes vivement emue, and unable to articulate, just at the critical moment when two words more would explain everything, and make her happy with her adorer. Were it not for this provoking weakness, she would be married and settled long before the end of the first volume but then, to be sure, what would become of all the remaining pages of French sentimentality? If there were no uncertainty, there would be no romance--if we knew each other better, perhaps we should love each other less. Hopes and fears make up the game of life. Better be the germinating flower, blooming in the sunshine, and cowering in the blast, than the withered branch, defiant indeed of winter's cold and summer's heat, but drinking in no dew of morning, putting forth no buds of spring, and in its dreary, barren isolation, unsusceptible of pleasure as of pain. 14

(One other reference in the novel[15] is merely a passing one to the unities and the fact that modern speed of transportation has made observance of the unities unnecessary and out of date.)

The longest passage about the writing of fiction occurs in The White Rose, another transitional novel, marking the point at which a shift in emphasis and tone becomes apparent.[16] It concerns plot and as written centers on the stage though the allusions are to the novel. Gerard Ainslie, back from California, is encouraged by Mr. Barrington-Belgrave to write a play. Whyte-Melville comments on the ease with which a set of stock characters can be evolved, in a long passage which levels off Richardson, Fielding, Lever, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray,

and Miss Braddon (together with the contemporary theatre) to one stock pattern, a somewhat depressing critical view despite the jocularity of tone which is intended:

> You will find. . . .in Ivanhoe the regular stock characters necessary for the construction of every narrative and every plot. If you look for anything beyond these, you will have considerable difficulty in hitting on it. First, there is Wilfrid himself, the hero, pure and simple, type of strength, courage, address, rectitude, modesty, and good looks. Would he not have been Sir Gawain at the round table, Sir Charles Gradison in the last century, and more fire-eating dandies than I can name in all the novels of the present? Dickens has got him a situation as an usher at a Yorkshire school; Thackeray taught him to paint, sent him to Charterhouse, and married him to Rowena instead of Rebecca, though he took him out of that scrape too before the end of the third volume; while Lever, remembering certain proclivities for spur and spear, purchased his commission and shipped him off to serve under the Great Duke in the uniform of an Irish dragoon. We might pursue the parallel through every one of the characters who attended the tournament at Ashby-de-laZouch. There is the Black Knight, strong, good-tempered, and not burdened with wisdom; Front-de-Boeuf, strong, bad-tempered, and totally devoid of scruple. Have we not seen the one with bare neck and glazed hat, the other in high boots and broad black belt, whenever the nautical drama sets Jack Hearty, the bluejacket, in opposition to Paul Perilous, the pirate? Bois Guilbert--and so far the Templar's title remains equally appropriate --has of late become a lawyer, but the sort of lawyer who keeps prussic acid in his inkstand, and a six-shooter in his blue bag. Is not Bracy the Lovelace of Clarissa Harlowe, and the Sir Charles Coldstream of Lady Clutterbuck? Parson Adams was no heavier a bruiser, and scarcely more respectable a priest, than the Clerk of Copmanhurst. Gurth and Wamba have worn the powder and plush of every livery in vogue since the first French Revolution. Cedric of Rotherwood has come down to farm his own estate of less than a hundred acres; and Ethelred the Unready has been so often before the footlights at the shortest notice, and in such various guise, that he deserves rather to be called Vertumnus the Versatile.

> With regard to the ladies, for many centuries we have been limited to two classes of heroines--the dark-eyed and affectionate, the blue-eyed and coy. Rowena and Rebecca must be quite tired of dressing over and over again for their parts; and if for nothing else, we owe Miss Braddon a mine of gratitude that she has introduced us at least to a more original style--to a young person with a good deal of red in her hair, and a refreshing contempt for many of our long-cherished superstitions, including those inculcated by the Church Catechism, though it must be admitted that, however fascinating she may make her wicked witches, the right moral is always skilfully worked out in the end. 17

Whyte-Melville goes on to comment that Gerard could have written any number of plays by pillaging scenes from the novels of Mrs. Braddon. (This suggests Gilbert Gurney's method of arranging a mosaic from French farces. Like Gurney, too, Ainslie is given help in the writing of the play by the man who is to be the chief actor, help which refashions the play to give the principal role ever greater dominance). Whyte-Melville pauses to comment on the readiness of the audience of the day to watch melodrama:

> Play-going people had been subsisting for a long time on musical extravaganzas, of which the extravagance outdid the music; far-fetched burlesques, of little humour and less wit; drowsy readings from Shakespeare; translations ill-translated, and adaptations, worse adapted, from the French. The public were hungry for a real, old-fashioned melodrama once more, with love, murder, glittering swords, stage jewellery, frantic dialogue, and appropriate action. They longed to see the stride, the strut, the stop--a scowling villain, a daring lover--a Gothic hall, a moonlit pass--above all, an injured heroine, now tearful and dishevelled, with pale face and hollow eyes, despairing at the back; anon, radiant in smiles, white satin, and imitation pearls, exulting before the footlights, victorious over insult and oppression, triumphantly to vindicate the first

> principle of stage morality, that "Beauty can do no wrong." 18

The plot which Gerard outlines is startling enough to satisfy even Mr. Barrington Belgrave:

> It was to be called by the high-sounding title of Pope Clement; or, the Cardinal's Collapse, and the situations he trusted would prove startling enough to satisfy the requirements of Mr. Barrington-Belgrave himself. Of these perhaps the least remarkable were the Pope's discovery of the cardinal on his knees to a young lady, disguised as a peasant, who had come to confess; the head of the Catholic Church presiding over a council table, under which was concealed on all-fours an Italian brigand, who proved afterwards, as the plot developed itself, to be the cardinal's own son; lastly, the attempted assassination of this cardinal in the gloomy recesses of the Vatican by that unnatural child, whose hand is seized, when on the verge of parricide, by the young lady formerly disguised as a peasant, with whom father and son are both in love, but who, preferring the younger admirer, of course, seeks and finds him here very successfully by torchlight. 19

It is representative of Whyte-Melville's mildness of principle in such matters that when the play is finally produced, he describes it quite seriously in a passage which is not unlike the passages of pageantry to be found in The Gladiators and Sarchedon:

> Great masses of red and white group themselves artistically in the old Roman street, over which a judicious arrangement of gas sheds all the warmth and glare of real Italian sunshine. It is impossible to detect where the human figures end and the painted crowd begins. Deeper and deeper that gorgeous phalanx gathers, and still, by a waving movement never discontinued, the effect is gained of an ever-increasing multitude massed together in the streets and squares of a city. Processions of white-robed priests and acolytes wind in stately measure through the midst; censers are swinging choristers chanting, waving banners and massive croziers are borne to the front. It is the great scenic triumph of the play, and a burst of grand

> music appropriately heralds its exhibition to the audience. While she looks and listens, Norah's heart seems very full; but a quiet sensation of repose steals over her, and she attributes it, perhaps, to the influence of those exalted strains, rather than to an instinctive consciousness of his presence whom she still so dearly loves. /Gerard Ainslie has just entered the box./ 20

If Whyte-Melville conceived of himself as a fellow-artist of such painters, it was in the historical novels that he must have found his escape. The fairyland theme is repeated in M. or N., for Simon paints an elaborate picture of the Faerie Queen.

> It represented Thomas the Rhymer in Fairyland, at the moment when its glamour is falling from his eyes, when its magic lustre is dying out on all that glittering pageantry and the elfin is fading to a gnome. The handsome wizard turns from a crowd of phantom shapes, half lovely, half grotesque--for their change is even now in progress--to look wistfully and appealingly on the queen. . . .She is still unchanged. Around him the fairies are shedding their glory as trees in autumn shed their leaves. Here a sweet laughing face surmounts the hideous body of an imp, there the bright scales of an unearthly armour shrivel to rottenness and dust. The dazzling robes are turning blank and colourless, the emerald rays waning to a pale, sad light, the flashing diadem is dulled and dim. Yet on the Fairy Queen there lowers no shadow of change, there threaten no symptoms of decay. 22

This conception of a glory passing away haunts Whyte-Melville,[23] and allusions to Thomas the Rhymer are frequent.[24] (In The Brookes of Bridlemere,[25] the novelist makes Philip Stoney, the young brewer, a reader of Spenser's Faerie Queene.)

## Section (2) Literary Influences: Thackeray

The main lines of influence and literary relationship have already been traced.[26] The chief fact to be noticed about the novels is that they are part of a fairly extensive body of mid-Victorian fiction dealing with fashionable London and country house life and including sporting and military life. Among the novelists somewhat similar in matter and tone are James Grant (more even than Marryat and Lever), John Mills (more than R. S. Surtees), Henry Kingsley (more than his brother Charles). These novelists share with Whyte-Melville an old-fashioned gentlemanly tone (old-fashioned in the late sixties and seventies at least). Among the newer-fashioned novelists related to Whyte-Melville, who show a popularization or vulgarization of the tradition are George Lawrence, "Ouida," and Henry Hawley Smart.[27]

In general, Whyte-Melville is both more substantial as a novelist, more serious, and less effective. The novels of John Mills are the thinnest of tales in scheme and characterization. James Grant is more ingenious in plot but even more conventional. The later novelists--Lawrence, "Ouida," and Smart--are more skillful in the manipulation of plot and situation, but they are either sensational or lush or flippant, and their work suggests the commercial more than Whyte-Melville's does. They are all "slick" writers. Beside them Whyte-Melville is a

novelist of serious intent, who though he usually fails of success if measured by serious standards, preserves in his failures a dignity which Lawrence's Guy Livingstone, or Ouida's Under Two Flags, or Smart's Bound to Win never achieves.

This seriousness of intention is, perhaps, absorbed from Thackeray, who more than any of the greater Victorians, influenced Whyte-Melville.[28] Despite the chasm between the two in quality, range, and incisiveness, the similarities of attitude, subject, and also of manner are so great that one can frequently move from one to the other without change in the set of terms in which he thinks or the attitudes to which he adjusts himself, from Whyte-Melville's Cerise, The White Rose, Uncle John, and Black but Comely, for example, to Thackeray's Henry Esmond, Pendennis, and The Newcomes.

Pendennis, in fact, together with The Newcomes, contains very nearly the whole Whyte-Melvillean duty of man. Many of the Whyte-Melville dandies are modeled after Pendennis. By his second year at Boniface, Pendennis is an Oxford man of fashion.[29] Digby Grand is already known at Eton as "Dandy" Grand. It is "impossible to resist" Pendinnis' good nature, or in his worst moments, not hope for his rescue from ruin"; in the midst "of a thousand vanities and weaknesses," he has "as yet some generous impulses, and is not altogether dishonest".[30] Gilbert

Orme of Good for Nothing is similarly preserved by a native innocence of spirit from the worst corruptions of the worldling. Although Pendennis has "an air of imperious good-humour, and a royal frankness and majesty," he is "but one in descent from a gallipot".[31] Like him (and like George Osborne of Vanity Fair),[32] several Whyte-Melvillean dandies are but shortly removed from trade--Charles Kettering, Frank Lovell, and Walter Brooke, all, it may be noted, in the earlier novels. (Although Whyte-Melville records the fact of their trade connections with comment on family pretensions, he is clearly relieved that their present position whitewashes the past). As a youth Pen spouts Byron and Moore.[33] So also do the young men of Whyte-Melville, although Pen's enthusiasm for Loves of the Angels in the 1840's[34] dates him less than Miss Bruce's similar preference in the 1870's--unless the new woman begins a generation behind the opposite sex. Pen turns to successful hack-writing when other sources of income fail. So Gerard Ainslie in The White Rose, although Gerard turns his hand to plays rather than to the fashionable novel which Lord Mt. Helicon in General Bounce had already found no longer in demand.

The White Rose, in addition, contains a greater number of specific coincidences with Pendennis and The Newcomes than any other single Whyte-Melville novel. Pendennis may even have suggested, indirectly, the title,

if Whyte-Melville read the book as closely as he seems to have. For young Harry Foker makes much of a white rose which Blanche Clavering has given him,[35] one of the several which she has distributed from her superfluity (Pendennis has one too), withered at the end of the evening; and The White Rose takes its title from a brief incident during which Gerard possesses himself of a withered rose dropped on the sidewalk by Norah Vandeleur, at the end of an evening's party.[36] Fanny Draper, the miller's daughter of The White Rose, who marries above her station, who learns many of the manners of a lady,[37] and eventually goes on the stage, telescopes aspects of Emily Costigan and Fanny Bolton of Pendennis. Mr. Barrington-Belgrave who teaches Fanny Draper her acting when he is but Mr. Bruff in the provinces is not distant from Mr. Bows of Pendennis, although he never becomes as pathetic a figure as the latter, who loses successively Emily Costigan and Fanny Bolton as pupils and objects of devotion. Like the Fanny of Pendennis, Whyte-Melville's Fanny nurses her young gentleman through an illness, but unlike the Thackerayan Fanny, secures Gerard's gratitude and his name in marriage. Like Thackeray, Whyte-Melville describes in detail a play in which Fanny (Emily in Pendennis) acts the leading role.[38] (Further, the Catholic pomp and ceremony in the Whyte-Melvillean play within a novel are not unlike the pageantry in a chapter of Thackeray's The Newcomes.)[39]

Several other scenes in The White Rose echo Pendennis and The Newcomes. Like Tom Newcome, Gerard is still bound to a wife whom he does not love, even after the woman he loves (Norah in The White Rose) is free to marry him. Like Tom, Gerard is freed from his marriage by an accident (Fanny Ainslie is burned to death in a fire at the theatre; Rose Newcome dies more naturally and credibly in child-birth). Scenes of passion involving the principal characters occur in Germany in both novels, at Baden-Baden in The Newcomes,[40] at Homburg in The White Rose (although the Ainslies have just come from Baden-Baden). This is Whyte-Melville's only scene in such a setting. Norah's butler Smart, and Burton's valet Brown in The White Rose are sketched in much greater detail than is customary with Whyte-Melville, and the latter resembles Pendennis' Morgan although there is no such scene as Morgan's rebellion and the Major's capable suppression of the uprising. Dandy Burton, too, is a snob and a coward, who does not quite fit the more usual Whyte-Melvillean pattern but is not unlike Barnes Newcome.

Resemblances exist between Pendennis and The Newcomes and other Whyte-Melville novels. Whyte-Melville's adventurers are given characters much like that of Col. Altamount, the adventurer, dangerous when desperate, companionable when well-off. Like him they blackmail their way into good society, and like him several are also

husbands who had been long thought dead and whose return brings difficulty and distress.[41] Whyte-Melville's heroines are more like Helen Newcome than like Becky Sharp or Beatrix Esmond: they are proud at the beginning, chastened at the end, although Whyte-Melville frequently violates consistency as Thackeray did not, by introducing touches of the predatory Becky at the beginning (Jane Lee of Black but Comely), or of the cold and haughty Beatrix (Maud Bruce of M. or N.), or even of Emily Costigan (compare the description of Emily in Pendennis[42] with those of Jin Ross and Blanche Douglas), and then by providing scenes of repentance and change in the last chapters. The edges of the portraits are blurred, the characters relatively sentimentalized.

As one might expect, there are touches of Col. Newcome (who "likes to be in the company of gentlemen" and who thinks Sir Roger de Coverly, and Sir Charles Grandison, and Don Quixote "the finest gentlemen in the world")[43] in several of the old soldiers in Whyte-Melville. The unfailing sensitive tact and old-fashioned courtesy of General St. Josephs has something of the same evergreen Quixotism about it (although it seems to be supported by a more ironic realization that it is his one remaining weapon against the counter-attractions of the young officers who are his rivals). The Colonel, too, uses the phrase by which Whyte-Melville divides the elect from the

damned so many times. There is something, for example, which the Colonel does not quite like about Mr. Sherrick--it is easy to see that the man is "not quite a gentleman."[44] Young Clive possesses the same instinct: "I can't tell you what it is, or how it is. . . .only one can't help seeing the difference. It isn't rank and all that; only somehow there are some men gentlemen and some not."[45] (Major Pendennis is equally sharp, but his criterion is not so instinctive as that of the Colonel; his eye perceives manner rather than character. When he spots Mr. Boundell-Boundell at Oxford as a low fellow, for example, he comments, "There is the unmistakable look of slang and bad habits about this Mr. Boundell," and "I know by his style."[46] The difference in type of perception between the Colonel and the Major fits the distinction in character. Whyte-Melville again blurs distinctions so that the two types merge.

Like the chivalry of Colonel Newcome, the courtesy of the old veterans in Whyte-Melville is touched with melancholy and resignation, and like him, many of them have lost the object of their youthful devotion. These remain dim and past, though, never, like Mme. de Florac, returning during the novels). This mingling of resignation and kindliness (sharpened however by a tartness in Whyte-Melville's novels which Thackeray's Colonel Newcome does not show) is most evident in Uncle John,

whose life-long patience under the tongue-lashings of his nagging wife reminds one of the Colonel's submission to the reproaches of Mrs. Mackenzie, his son's mother-in-law. The death of Uncle John at the end of the novel, like that of Colonel Newcome, is a focus for pathos and reconciliations. Appearances of slighter parallels in this novel suggest that when Whyte-Melville writes scenes which recall Thackeray, little details which are associated (presumably) with the earlier reading of Thackeray, come to mind. For example, Uncle John is one of the novels which uses at the beginning the same kind of epistolary sequence which Thackeray uses early in The Newcomes; as in The Newcomes, the names Nokes and Stokes appear among the dramatis personae; and, as in Pendennis, the returned husband appears once more to bring distress to the wife who has remarried thinking him dead.

Like Uncle John, Black but Comely contains more of the elements of Whyte-Melville's "earlier" novels and so, as one might expect, more frequent echoes of Thackeray. Again, then, in recalling his earlier manner, Whyte-Melville recalls also his indebtedness to Thackeray. Jane Lee in Black but Comely is Whyte-Melville's Becky Becky Sharp, although she is a Becky Sharp with qualms of conscience which contradict her unscrupulous schemings and a Beck Sharp who, like Jin Ross in Contraband, is in sequence, remorseful, repentant, and reclaimed. There is

continued similarity of pattern between her career and Becky's. Her departure from the Tregarthen's rectory under the disapproving eye of Mr. Tregarthen is a casting off of bondage similar to that of Becky when she leaves Miss Pinkerton's. Like Becky she is talented in voice and in mimicry. Like Becky she pursues marriage without sentiment merely as one way of getting along in the world; like Becky's, her marriage to "Forward" James is *faute de mieux*. (Forward James himself is a rural Rawdon Crawley with touches of the blundering awkwardness of Josiah Sedley. He trails his wife with dog-like devotion, content to follow his sporting while she manages their brilliant career in fashionable life.) Like Becky, Jane Lee makes her way among "certain" people in society, and like Becky is dependent on an aristocratic admirer, Lord St. Moritz, experienced roue and man of the world, playing a weak Lord Steyne to Jane Lee's Becky Sharp. The marriage culminates in a stormy scene in which "Forward" James accuses her of relations with Lord St. Moritz. In *Vanity Fair* the question of Becky's sexual relationships is perhaps beside the point, presumably one more element in her calculations. But in *Black but Comely* it is clear that Jane Lee retains, technically at least, her decency. No consistency of characterization explains this, but apparently it is the one formal prerequisite for an acceptable reform at the end of the

novel, though in the meanwhile she has used all men heartlessly and has caused, indirectly, the death of one. The reformation of Jane Lee comes as a kind of anticlimax to a career in which, like Becky Sharp, she makes the best of each situation, proceeding to the next one with undeterred energy. At the end of Vanity Fair, the reader sees Becky Sharp busied--in appearance at least--in works of piety, frequenting churches, dispensing charity to the poor. Jane Lee ends similarly, but the reader is reassured that she has actually become a ministering angel, and the assurance is sealed by her marriage to a noble and long suffering clergyman.[47]

The list of parallels to Thackeray could be extended almost indefinitely. Like Ned Strong[48] in Pendennis, Digby Grand gives up gambling to be a wine dealer. (Sir Plantagenet Cripps in Tilbury Nogo, too, deals in wine.) The respectability of the marriage of Helen Brooke to Philip Stoney, brewer, in The Brookes of Bridlemere may have been certified by the marriage of Lady Agnes Foker, mother of Harry Foker, in Pendennis to a brewer. If Fanny Draper in The White Rose telescopes aspects of Emily Costigan and Fanny Bolton in Pendennis, Digby Grand and Mr. Shadrach (the money lender in Digby Grand) perhaps bifurcate Mr. Sherrick of The Newcomes. Mr. Sherrick,[49] whose name is rumored to have been Shadrach, combines the wine business with high class money-lending.

(Levant would be an easy name for a novelist of the time to hit upon as might be Mrs. Mantrap, but these two characters of Digby Grand have namesakes in Thackeray's The Newcomes and Pendennis.)

The dinner at Richmond Park in Pendennis[50] with the painted Miss Rougemont and Mlle. Coralie the horse-rider of Franconi's and her mother, sets the pattern for similar scenes at Richmond in the company of actresses in Digby Grand, Good for Nothing, and Black but Comely. The dancer at the park in Digby Grand is Coralie de Rivolte; Mme. Bravoura, the Italian singer, in the similar scene in Good for Nothing, is always accompanied by her mother. (In Kate Coventry it is after a party at Greenwich that Kate goes to Vauxhall and sees Mme. Rose D'amour, the horse-rider. In the same book, Sir Guy Scapegrace's leerings and chortlings of approval at Kate's high spirits suggest those of Sir Pitt Crawley in Vanity Fair.)

Even the repentance of young men of the world like Gaston D'Orville of General Bounce has precedent in Pendennis and The Newcomes. George Warrington, whose melancholy worldliness the early dandies of Whyte-Melville affect, in love with Laura, finds a Bible which Helen Pendennis has left by her son's bedside.

> Poor George mournfully kissed the book. . .and the morning found him still reading in its awful pages, in which so many stricken hearts, in which so many tender and faithful souls, have found comfort under calamity, and refuge and hope in affliction. 51

Pendennis, too, turns to the Divine Tenderness, as does Lord Kew in The Newcomes,[52] both at their mother's knees. (Lord Kew's repentance, like Gaston D'Orville's, is accelerated by a fever.)

> And once more, oh, once more, the young man fell down at his mother's sacred knees and sobbed out the prayer which the Divine Tenderness uttered for us, and which has been echoed for twenty ages since by millions of sinful and humble men. 53

Many minor characters could have come from Thackeray's pages. For the amiable and aristocratic Lord Holyhead of Good for Nothing and for Dolly Egremont of The White Rose, there is Lord Harry Foker in Pendennis. For the match-making Lady Mt. Helicon of General Bounce (actually an infrequent type in Whyte-Melville), there is the much more formidable Lady Kew of The Newcomes. For Lord Mt. Helicon himself, aristocratic writer of poetry, there is Lord Dodo of Pendennis. Dozens of Whyte-Melville's characters, like Lord Clavering of Pendennis confine their reading to Bell's Life and the racing calendar. There is no Major Pendennis in Whyte-Melville --perhaps the Major revealed too clearly the snobbery of the tuft-hunter (even though Whyte-Melville deprecates this). But the Major's traditions of Regency dandyism and of the wild "Prince Poins"[54] and the heroes of fashion since passed away, are recounted by several: Charley Wing in Good for Nothing, Sir Peregrine Grand of Digby Grand,

and Philip Egerton of The Interpreter. Regency dandyism cast its shadow long over the novels of Whyte-Melville, and even near the end he speaks of "Poor D'Orsay" and quotes his words on the gentleman. (Digby Grand himself is much closer to a regency buck like Rawdon Crawley than he is to the intellectual dandy of Bulwer and Disraeli.)

Even Whyte-Melville's paragraphs on the London season, which are so prominent an aspect of the novels, could have been drawn from Pendennis and The Newcomes, the former particularly. When Major Pendennis gives up London in May to extricate young Pen from his affair with Emily Costigan, his sacrifice is a neat summary of West End occupations.

> London in May--his newspapers and his mornings--his afternoons from club to club, his little confidential visits to my Ladies, his rides in Rotten Row, his dinners, and his stall at the Opera, his rapid escapades to Fulham or Richmond on Saturdays and Sundays, his bow from my Lord Duke or my Lord Marquis at the great London entertainments, and his name in the Morning Post of the succeeding day--his quieter little festivals, more select, secret, and delightful--all these he resigned. 55

Other passages in Pendennis record the season in full swing or the loneliness of London after the exodus to Scottish moors, yachting trips, or seaside resorts.[56] Similar passages can be found in The Newcomes, like the following vignette of dandies in Rotten Row:

> Mr. Newcome in Rotten Row riding side by side with other dandies, who had mustaches blond or jet, who wore flowers in their buttonholes (themselves being

> flowers of spring), who rode magnificent thorough-bred horses, scarcely touching their stirrups with the tips of their varnished boots, and who kissed the most beautiful primrose-coloured kid gloves to lovely ladies passing them in the ride. 57

In Thackeray's allusions one can find the pattern for many in Whyte-Melville, and even suggestions for incidents which Whyte-Melville elaborates. From Pendennis,[58] for example, "we read that the priests in the service of Baal gashed themselves and bled profusely" may have suggested the scenes in Sarchedon. And the passage which jocosely suggests a Baker Street adaptation of the Turkish practice of sewing unfaithful women in a sack ("pop your subject into the Bosphorus," "down with her--heave over the sack, away with it into the Golden Horn, bubble and squeak")[59] is given anecdotal amplification in the story of Zuleika in The Interpreter ending with her death in the "golden Bosphorus": "he dropped the sack overboard. . . .it sank immediately. . . he fancied he heard a faint shriek as it went down, and saw the bubbles plainly."

Whyte-Melville's decorative manner attempts to capture the allusiveness of Thackeray's style, and perhaps the least important aspect of it. But his allusions move in a narrow round of repetition, and he is not content until he has gilded the lily. From Thackeray:

> Don't we see every day in the world many an honest Hercules at the apron strings of Omphale, and great whiskered Samsons prostrate in Delilah's lap? 60

> 'Twas a woman that made a soldier of me, that set me intriguing afterward; I believe I would have spun smocks for her had she so bidden me; what strength I had in my head I would have given her; hath not every man in his degree had his Omphale and Delilah?[61]

From Whyte-Melville:

> Look at Hercules spellbound in the lap of Omphale, broad-fronted Antony enervated by black-browned Cleopatra. 62

And

> So it is--Hercules is but a cripple in sight of Omphale--Samson turns faint-hearted in the lap of Delilah. 63

And

> Oh, the old, old story! Samson and Delilah--Hercules and Omphale--Antony and Cleopatra, on the ruins of an empire--or plain Jack and Gill at the fair. 64

And

> All great men have their weaknesses. Hercules resting from his labours, spun yarns with Omphale; Antony combined fishing and flirtation; Porson loved pale ale, and refreshed himself copiously therewith; and shall not Monsieur Stein, whose Protean genius can assume the characters of all these heroes, display his taste for the fine arts in so picturesque a capital as his own native Vienna? 65

Thackeray himself repeats many of his allusions, but not with the persistency of Whyte-Melville. Among other favorite Thackerayan allusions are references to Lazarus and Dives and to the earthen or iron pot going down stream with the copper or brass kettle, both of them used frequently by Whyte-Melville, the latter particularly varied with painful conscientiousness.

More important than such decorations--the last two at least were commonplaces in Victorian fiction--is

Whyte-Melville's elaborate adoption of Thackeray's interpolated essays and his direct address to different kinds of reader according to his subject, with a profusion of rhetorical questions. Without Thackeray's talent for rapid pencil sketches or, more important, his power of creating suddenly a powerful scene (the famous ones, for example--Rawdon Crawley's discovery of Becky and Lord Steyne; the appearance of Beatrix at the head of the staircase upon Henry Esmond's return; the frustration of Morgan's attempt to blackmail Major Pendennis), Whyte-Melville's essays bear too much of the burden of effect, although in these he came nearer his master. Such lines as the following could be transposed from Thackeray to Whyte-Melville without disturbance of the Whyte-Melvillean tone:

> O Clarissas of this life, O you poor little ignorant, vain foolish maidens! If you did but know the way in which the Lovelaces speak of you. 66

Or

> If the best men do not draw the great prizes in life, we know it has been so settled by the Ordainer of the lottery. 67

Or

> It may, perhaps, have struck her that to have been honest and humble, to have done her duty, and to have marched straight-forward on her way, would have brought her as near happiness as that path by which she was striving to attain it. 68

Whyte-Melville's ambiguous attitude toward Stuart England, as well, basic as it is to his views, echoes much

in Thackeray's Henry Esmond. There is the same interest in the Jacobites loyal to the Stuarts, the same half-sympathy with Catholicism which Whyte-Melville expresses in his later novels, the same regret at the dissipated ineffectuality of the Stuart pretenders, the same commitment finally to the Protestant tradition of the Established Church, on the basis, if for no other reason, that it is English. (There is also the same fascinated interest mixed with revulsion that made stories of Englishmen trained by the Jesuits apparently popular: Thackeray's Henry Esmond; Shorthouse's John Inglesant; Henry Kingsley's Ravenshoe; and Charles Kingsley's Westward Ho. Whyte-Melville approaches this in Cerise with the Jesuit confessor of the French wife of an English country gentleman.) But unlike Whyte-Melville, who was struck chiefly by the pathos of a lost cause, Thackeray perceives clearly enough the ambiguities and contradictions of the old High Church and Tory Jacobite loyalties. "The Tory and High Church patriots were ready to die in defence of a Papist family that has sold us to France,"[69] he comments in an extended discussion of the strange compromises which make up English history.

Whyte-Melville's attitudes parallel others of Thackeray's. His world is even less extended than Thackeray's, but approximately the same limits define both. Like Thackeray's, too, his attitude toward that world is an odd mixture of satire and admiration, a mingling of

satire of middle-class pretensions with upper-middle class snobberies. Both Whyte-Melville's uneasiness with that world and his inability to conceive of another one reflect Thackeray's point of view. "Factory wheels are turning in the background of the Newcomes drama, but we never see them turn."[70] The same remark can be made about Whyte-Melville. Edmund Wilson's summary of Thackeray's "subject" could be applied without distortion to Whyte-Melville's.

> Dissociating itself from its background of trade, which it now had begun to ridicule, or assimilating itself to the nobility, whose standards it partly adopted, it sought exclusively to identify itself with the professions, with literature and painting, and with the Army and Navy and the Civil Service. The ups and downs of this world and the assertion of its fundamental dignity, as well as a certain dissatisfaction with its methods and aims, and rewards, really constitutes Thackeray's whole subject. He cannot see society as a whole as Dickens was able to do with all the paradoxes involved in its structure and the dislocations caused by its growth. 71

Similarly, Whyte-Melville's melancholy,[72] his continued meditations on the theme of cui bono, which parallels Thackeray's on Vanity Fair,[73] parallel Thackeray's "congenital melancholy," a melancholy "which often just avoids shading off into a grim morbidity, but which is saved always by a tenderness and a humour which are just as native to him."[74]

## Section (3) Byron

Another pervasive influence, both upon writers with Whyte-Melville's interests and upon the characters

who people their novels, is that of Byron. Thackeray himself supplies evidence for this,[75] but even more do others. In Grant's Frank Hilton, the young officer quotes Byron a number of times (as Sir Nigel in the same author's One of the Six Hundred quotes Thackeray). Coverdale in Smedley's novel reads Byron even when others are reading Tennyson, and Lewis Arundel in Smedley's novel draws paintings from Byron's Giaour. Talboys in Lady Audley's Secret keeps a notebook, when he is a young dragoon, with extracts from Byron and Moore. Lawrence's Guy Livingstone, who speaks of Colonel Newcome's chivalry, also praises Byron: "He published 'Childe Harold' and the Handbook to Everywhere. Could one man in one century do more for the Ideal and the Real?"[76] Galsworthy records the same relationship of interests: the shelves of Jack Muskham include Whyte-Melville and Thackeray, those of Charles Clare Winton, another formalist, soldier, hunting man, and bit of a dandy, the poems of Byron and the novels of Whyte-Melville.

The explanation of the influence is not hard to find. Byron's feelings are often expressed at that surface level with a simplicity of emotion which could be easily comprehended by men of action. His own exploits were the sort which men of action could understand. In addition, he provides a source book of the same kind of romantic melancholy and disillusionment which the soldier-adventurer

could respond to, whether young (Childe Harold, Don Juan) or old (the grizzled warriors whose hearts have been dead since the loss of a woman in youth, characters to be found especially in the oriental poems). Byron's pose of wearied exhaustion and his satire, which hits at the surface of society without touching uncomfortably its foundations, fit well into the pattern. (Cantos xii and xiii of Don Juan, which carry the hero through the London season and the country house season respectively are convenient examples.[77] With Byron's ironic address to the Duke of Wellington in Canto ix, Whyte-Melville and the others would have less sympathy.)

In Whyte-Melville's early novels it is the oriental romances which figure in the education of the young dandy. Digby Grand, convalescing from an accident, falls in love with Fanny Jones, the fort-major's daughter, who nurses him. Describing the mitigating circumstances, Digby writes, "Let the victim, besides all this, drink tea and read Byron; let him find himself quoting largely from The Giaour, Parisina, and the Bride of Abydos."[78] In General Bounce Frank Hardingstone warns young Charlie Kettering away from Byron.

> "'Parisina' and 'The Bride of Abydos'", he repeated with intense disgust, "a boy of sixteen--I beg your pardon--a young man of your age reading Byron; why you'll arrive at a state of mental delirium tremens before you are twenty, particularly if you smoke much at the same time. . .No man should read

> sentiment in such an alluring garb as Byron dressed it, till his heart is hardened and his whiskers grown." 79

And in Good for Nothing the fact that Lady Gertrude's book shelves do not show the works of Byron and Moore is singled out for comment.[80]

But Byron is also the "realist," the "poet, of all others, who describes life as it is, not as it ought to be."[81] Although Digby Grand, enmeshed in a sentimental attachment, eschews Beppo and Don Juan,[82] Frank Hardingstone in a later novel qualifies his admonition against Byron by the remark that Don Juan is not half bad, even for a sixteen-year-old.[83] Later it is Don Juan almost entirely that occupies Whyte-Melville's mind. In Satanella, the General--after exposing himself to the public as the wooer of a woman much younger than he, waiting attendance upon her for weeks, and putting himself into debt to the amount of three thousand pounds for her--receives Blanche's letter saying that she cannot fulfil her promise to marry him. He murmurs drily to himself, with more humor than usual: "It's a good letter, but I prefer the one Julia wrote to Juan."[84] Still later, in a characteristic repetition, Whyte-Melville describes Lord Fitzowen (Roy's Wife) as one who like "Byron's sample-peer" had "loved his love and gamed his gaming" and Lord St. Moritz, in the next novel (Black but Comely), as one who like Bryon's

"representative nobleman" had "lived his life and gamed his gaming."[85] (As one might expect in the novels of a sporting man, Mazeppa is also quoted frequently.)[86]

## Section (4) Henry Kingsley

It is in the novels of Henry Kingsley that the attitudes basic to Whyte-Melville's novels reach a further development of greater intrinsic worth[87] than the variations upon his themes to be found in Lawrence, or "Ouida" or Smart. Like Whyte-Melville, Henry Kingsley clings to the chivalric conceptions of human nature and to the conception of the "gentleman," conceptions threatened by the growing democratic movement and the vulgarization which accompanied this movement. But the similarities between the two only heighten the contrasts. In range of sympathy and of characterization and in sensibility and depth of perception, the younger Kingsley is far superior to Whyte-Melville.

This difference between the two is most noticeable perhaps in the warmth of Kingsley's affection for the people of his novels and in the warmth which they show to one another. (He is also more fully conscious of the many contradictions of human nature, an awareness which breaks in continually upon his attempt to type people.[88]) It is also to be seen in the intensity of his

response to uncertainty, and intensity which at points comes close to terror and is a deeper perception than the uneasy resentment which seems to be Whyte-Melville's dominant response. The two aspects reenforce one another. The loss of identity as part of an established order with which Kingsley is preoccupied and which he frequently makes his chief theme throws him back upon human affection and sympathy as the last resource. (For this reason his scenes which record the lost chance for the kind word and the noble act[89] assume greater significance than do similar scenes in Whyte-Melville's novels.) If "democratization" of the concept of the "gentleman" was a process working itself out during this period, Kingsley rather attempts a "personalization" of the concept of the gentleman: it is less the dignity of the common man than the nobility of the individual that he finally relies upon.

To a certain extent the very weaknesses of plot in Henry Kingsley's novels are the product of these concerns. The complicated family relationships, with their odd combinations of known illegitimacies and hidden or secret legitimacies, move central characters through shifting circumstances so that now they are gentlemen, now without heritage or position. So also do these plots throw into relief the characters of the family members, silly at the least, darkly passionate or mad at the worst,[90] and quixotic in their noble attachments at the best. In the

instability of circumstance which he records, firm reliance is placed on brave and open friendships,[91] often formed at sight, and on warmth of personal affection among members of the families.[92] The happy endings of such novels as Geoffrey Hamlyn, with their group felicity, are not merely manipulations of plot but rather an opportunity to reveal a flowering of love or the release finally of affection after long difficulties and hardships.[93]

Ravenshoe provides the sharpest handling of the problem of loss of identity, though Leighton Court, in the character of Hammersley, deals with the same theme. Charles Ravenshoe, by breeding and habit the English sportsman and gentleman, discovers that his loyal groom, and not he, is really the heir to Ravenshoe. Both he and the groom are lost, for the groom who has attended Charles through youth and days at Oxford is as bewildered at the prospect of becoming a gentleman as Charles is at his fall in rank. Charles suffers "terrible angony" at the feeling of loss of identity. "This at times. . .washed away from me the only spar to which I could cling--the feeling that I was a gentleman. When the deluge came, that was the only creed I had."[94] Charles takes service as groom to Lt. Hornsby, and by an interesting reversal finds himself a part of the very society from which he has been expelled. William, who is now the gentleman, had been the faithful servant; so now Charles takes on the duties of his new

position earnestly. Lt. Hornby "was certainly a splendid fellow, and Charles looked at him with a kind of pride, as at something that he had a share in."[95] (Sassoon in his Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man, records a similar pride in the groom Dixon, who has in a sense trained his master from boyhood to be a gentleman.) Leighton Court in the character of Hammersley repeats elements of this situation, and the same sense of loss of identity is a theme which adds power of feeling to other novels, including those with Australian settings, such as Geoffrey Hamlyn and The Hillyars and the Burtons.

In The White Rose Whyte-Melville had dealt hesitantly with insanity. The theme assumes major importance in two of Kingsley's novels, Silcote of Silcotes and Leighton Court. There is a sense in these novels of evil circumstance beneath the outward calm, tortured minds, hints of crime. (This theme also recurs in other novels by Kingsley.[96]) One of the characters, Kriegsthurm, in Silcote of Silcotes theorizes about this: "You Silcotes, one and all of you, have just stopped on the verge of madness. . . . There are many such families: and they are generally, I should say always, brilliant and successful." But the Silcotes, he adds, "seem to have arrived at that average when you are both too sane and too mad for success."[97] Dora, a child during the story (children are frequent characters in Henry Kingsley's books), looking back later

on her girlhood, speaks of the "dark story, which we never could understand," which gave a special fascination to their family life.[98] Like most of Henry Kingsley's novels, Leighton Court traces the relationships of two families. In this novel one of them is undermined by financial ruin known only to the head of the family. (The deterioration of Mr. Seckerton's character, his gradually-arrived-at willingness to sell his daughter on the marriage mart is an important element of the story.) The other of them is undermined by madness (the madness of Sir Harry Poyntz). The novel provides one character who makes an interesting contrast with Kate Coventry. Laura Seckerton, like Kate, has her Hannah-More-reading monitor, a grandmother rather than an aunt, and like Kate is an energetic horsewoman. But the wildness of the Dartmoor country is part of her nature, and beside her Kate is a prim city miss. Laura is divided in character. The day of hunting is one of liberty and joyous adventure, in contrast to the days of "quiet, order, and industry."[99] She wonders "in case of overwhelming trouble" (a possibility which never occurs to Kate) to which of these lives she would fly for comfort. (Lord Hatterleigh, Laura's awkward, fumbling, simple, but patient and noble-hearted suitor, is not unlike several characters in Whyte-Melville's novels although there is no precise parallel, and no portrait in the latter's works as well done.)

As fully committed emotionally to the chivalric feudal ideal,[100] Henry Kingsley is more successful than Whyte-Melville in distinguishing between character and manners (what Galsworthy calls the difference between "form" and "good form"), and he is much more fully aware of evils of the established society and of the necessity for readjustment. His comments on the bravery under fire of young dandies of Rotten Row is tempered by a perception of the ridiculous in their mannerisms, and of their limitations, and he makes a plea to the dandies for a greater sense of responsibility and for an understanding of the problems of the lower classes. In The Harveys, Charles goes so far as to wonder "would it not be better to let the whole tradition of the family go, and start in the world as anything only to find what one was worth in the world and live up to that."[101] In still another way Kingsley is Whyte-Melville's superior, in his ability to set a fact in a somewhat larger context. A slight but relevant instance of this is his consideration of the change in the type of dandy from Regency to Victorian days. Through the words of Lord Saltire, he speculates on this unbrutalization of the dandy and its relationship to the wars of the early part of the century and to wars in the future.[102]

In other ways, more directly technical, Henry Kingsley must be given a place above Whyte-Melville--in

the power of realization and recreation, for example, continued touches of vivid and convincing detail, which make the scenes of London in the spring a poetic evocation[103] and the scenes in the Crimea psychologically intimate.[104] Also in a talent for the dramatic scene which suggests a wiser schooling in Thackeray[105] than that of Whyte-Melville.[106] In this Kingsley is more venturesome; he risks greater absurdity, but accomplishes more.[107]

## Footnotes CHAPTER XVII

1. For a sketch of general literary influences, see above, Chapter iv.

2. Pages 17 and 20.

3. Page 21.

4. Pages 194-195.

5. Page 35.

6. Page 369 (*Scotland and the Moors*).

7. Page 20.

8. Page 353.

9. Page 104.

10. Page 171.

11. Page 262.

12. A partial list of authors and works referred to in the novels: Apperly (*Tilbury Nogo*, pp. 17 and 21; *Market Harborough*, p. 150; *Inside the Bar*, p. 239); Byron /see below, Section 3/; Butler's *Hudibras* (*Satanella*, p. 274); Coleridge (*Satanella*, p. 339; *Black but Comely*, p. 236); Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* (*Tilbury Nogo*, pp. 194 and 295; *Satanella*, p. 53); Charles Dibdin (*Black but Comely*, p. 308); Fielding (*Digby Grand*, p. 205); Gay's *Beggar's Opera* (*Digby Grand*, p. 47; *Black but Comely*, p. 279, and other places); A. L. Gordon (*Satanella*, p. 37; *Black but Comely*, p. 179); Hood (*Black but Comely*, p. 284); Hook's *Gilbert Gurney* (*Digby Grand*, p. 269; *Tilbury Nogo*, p. 35); Charles Kingsley's verse (*Bones and I*, p. 273; *Roy's Wife*, p. 68; *Black but Comely*, p. 263); Lever's *Charles O'Malley* (*Tilbury Nogo*, p. 369); Lytton (*Roy's Wife*, p. 235); Marryat's *Peter Simple* (*Tilbury Nogo*, p. 353); Charles Mathews, the dramatist (*The Interpreter*, p. 35; *The White Rose*, p. 215); Thomas Moore (several references, for example *Tilbury Nogo*, p. 104; *Roy's Wife*, p. 51; *Black but Comely*, p. 13); Christopher North (*Scotland and the Moors*, p. 366; *Black but Comely*, p. 226); Scott (*Tilbury Nogo*, p. 171; *General Bounce*, p. 60; *Satanella*, p. 284); Surtees (*Market Harborough*, pp. 64 and 73; *Tilbury Nogo*, p. 262; *General Bounce*, p. 209; *Inside*

the Bar, p. 239); Tennyson (The White Rose, p. 188; Contraband, p. 156; Uncle John, p. 429; Bones and I, Chap. xii); also Cowper's John Gilpin (Kate Coventry, p. 60; Black but Comely, p. 168).

13. General Bounce, p. 164.

14. The same, p. 95.

15. The same, p. 135.

16. See above, Chapter iv; also the discussions of The White Rose and of M. or N.

17. The White Rose, p. 216. Cp. Wagenknecht, work cited, p. 157: "Ivanhoe is Exhibit A in the museum of historical romance; it established patterns which are still employed."

18. The White Rose, p. 375.

19. The same, p. 217.

20. The same, pp. 378-379.

21. The Interpreter, pp. 4-5.

22. M. or N., p. 111.

23. See above, Chap. iv, Section 1, on Whyte-Melville as a symbol of passing chivalry.

24. Two artists frequently mentioned in the novels are Frank Grant and Landseer, and at one point Whyte-Melville describes a painting by Landseer which probably servied as the model for the masterpiece of Simon Perkins (Bones and I, p. 329).

25. Page 75.

26. See above, Chapter iv, Section 2.

27. Francis E. Smedley differs somewhat in tone and attitude from these. Mrs. Braddon no doubt could be shown to have relationships with this school.

28. As early as 1858 when only the first four novels had been published (and the fifth had appeared in

Fraser's) critics noticed Whyte-Melville's indebtedness to Thackeray. Jeaffreson (work cited, II, 376) speaks of Whyte-Melville at that date as "somewhat an imitator of Thackeray." It is the later Thackeray of Pendennis and The Newcomes whom Whyte-Melville owes the most to. (For a description of the change in Thackeray beginning with Pendennis and The Newcomes, see Chandler, work cited, II, 466.) It is interesting to notice that Thackeray and Whyte-Melville were the only contemporaries of Surtees who gave him a word of enthusiasm or even of recognition. Even the hunting journalists refraining from approval (Watson, work cited, p. 244). Other writers who are related to Whyte-Melville also show an interest in Thackeray.

29. Pendennis, Chap. xviii

30. The same, Chap. xix.

31. The same, Chap. xxx.

32. See Vanity Fair, Chap. xiii, opening paragraphs.

33. Pendennis, Chap. vi.

34. The same, Chap. vii.

35. The same, Chap. xlv. See also Chap. v, Note 30.

36. See above, Chap. v, Note 30.

37. See, for example, Pendennis, Chaps. xlvi and lxxii.

38. Pendennis, Chap. iv.

39. The Newcomes, Chap. xxxv throughout.

40. See Chap. xxxviii especially. M. de Florac is the gambler. Count de Tourbillon in Whyte-Melville's The White Rose is a philanderer rather than a gambler, but he is the only portrait of a French character in the society novels.

41. See Pendennis, Chap. lxiv, for example.

42. Chap. iv. The passage is as follows: "She was of the tallest of women, and at her then age of six and twenty--for six and twenty she was though she vows she was only nineteen--in the prime and fullness of her beauty. Her forehead was vast, and her black hair waved over it with a natural ripple, and was confined in shining and voluminous braids at the back of a neck such as you see on the shoulders of the Louvre Venus--that delight of Gods and men. Her eyes, when she lifted them up to gaze on you, and ere she dropped their purple deep fringed lids, shone with tenderness and mystery unfathomable." Cp. above, Chap. xii, Section 2, the description of Blanche Douglas.

43. The Newcomes, Chap. iv.

44. Chap. xxiii.

45. Chap. vii.

46. Chap. xix.

47. Another echo of Vanity Fair occurs in Good for Nothing in the ruin of Alderman Jones. When the house and property is sold, Lord Holyhead buys Bella's favorite parrot and returns it to her anonymously, much as Dobbin buys Amelia's piano for her.

48. Pendennis, Chap. lxxv.

49. See Chap. lxx.

50. Chap. xl.

51. Pendennis, Chap. liii

52. Chap. xxxviii.

53. Chap. lvii.

54. See, for example, Chap. lxviii.

55. Chap. ix.

56. Pendennis, Chap. xlvi. See also Chap. xxxvi, the London season in full swing.

57. The Newcomes, Chap. xliii.

58. Chap. xliv.

59. The same work, Chap. liii. Both, perhaps, are indebted to Byron's Bride of Abydos.

60. Vanity Fair, Chap. lvi.

61. Henry Esmond, Bk. III, Chap. v.

62. Bones and I, p. 160.

63. General Bounce, p. 235.

64. The Interpreter, p. 345.

65. The same, p. 310.

66. Pendennis, Chap. liii.

67. The same, final chapter.

68. Vanity Fair, Chap. xli.

69. Henry Esmond, Bk. III, Chap. v.

70. Wagenknecht, work cited, p. 278.

71. New Yorker, 8 February 1947, p. 86.

72. Maxwell (DNB, 173a) speaks of Whyte-Melville's unhappy marriage and attributes the strain of melancholy in his writings to this, but without further external evidence it is difficult to determine the precise relationship of such personal influences to literary and social ones.

73. Actually the allusions to Thackeray by name in Whyte-Melville's novels are not frequent. In General Bounce (p. 191) he quotes Thackeray as saying "Life is a mistake." In Contraband, (p. 174) he writes: "Of all Thackeray's keen touches, there are none keener than that in which Lord Steyne says, 'everybody wants what they haven't got. 'Gad, I dined with the King yesterday, and We'd boiled mutton and turnips." In Roy's Wife he has Miss Bruce unable to read Shakespeare, to understand Tennyson, or to take interest in Mme. de Stael's Corinne; she thinks in her heart that Vanity Fair and Moore's Loves of the Angels are the two finest works in the language

(p. 52). Earlier he had indicated uncertainty about Thackeray's tone, in The White Rose, where he speaks of Gerard Ainslie in moments of bitterness remembering "Thackeray's biting pages, clandestinely devoured at study-hours" and speaks of Thackeray as that "English novelist whose sentiments so strangely influence both young and old" who speaks of inconstant woman "with a grim pity, half in sorrow, half in anger, excusing with quaint phrases and pathetic humour the inconstancy of her whose very nature it is to be fascinated by novelty and subject to the influence of change" (p. 125).

74. Dodds, quoted in Wagenknecht, work cited, p. 269.

75. See preceding section.

76. Guy Livingstone, Chap. xxxi.

77. Cantos v-vi in the harem of the Sultan and Canto vii which deals with the Russian-Turkish war have obvious relationships with such novels as The Interpreter.

78. Digby Grand, p. 20.

79. General Bounce, p. 26.

80. Good for Nothing, Chap. i.

81. Tilbury Nogo, p. 21.

82. Digby Grand, p. 20.

83. General Bounce, p. 26.

84. Satanella, p. 315.

85. Roy's Wife, p. 357, and Black but Comely, p. 195.

86. Examples: The Interpreter, p. 162, and Black but Comely, p. 195. The allusions are made in somewhat similar contexts.

87. Elwin is the only writer among those who were consulted who speaks of this similarity between Whyte-Melville and Henry Kingsley. But Elwin gives Whyte-Melville a more prominent place and does not concede to Henry

Kingsley the merits ascribed to him in this section. That Henry Kingsley is superior to his brother Charles is not an eccentric view, however: see George Sampson, Concise Cambridge History of English Literature, 1941, p. 795. It is Charles Kingsley's verse rather than his novels that Whyte-Melville alludes to in his books, and there is not evidence that he had paid attention to the fiction of either brother. Despite the similarity in scene, character, and attitude between Whyte-Melville and the younger Kingsleys, there is no evidence of actual indebtedness.

88. These perceptions bring to life such unlikely characters as Father Mackworth in Ravenshoe, the scheming and unscrupulous Catholic priest. At the moment when he breaks down in passionate grief at the death of Cuthbert, the older brother, who has been to some extent the victim of his schemes, Henry Kingsley treats him sympathetically. Henry Kingsley shares his brother's antipathy to the Catholic Church, but mingled with the antipathy there is a half-sympathetic fascination, and the difference between the two in range of human sympathy is clear in their treatment of such characters.

89. The Hillyars and the Burtons, Chap. xix, for example.

90. For the infection of madness in aristocratic families see Silcote of Silcotes and Leighton Court especially.

91. Erne and the Burton family, for example, in The Hillyars and the Burtons.

92. The affection between Austin and his father, for example, in Austin Elliot.

93. This affection which humanizes the characters, tempers harsh judgments, and prevents over simplification, does, at its worst, lead to over-articulate and somewhat wearisome scenes in which noble men exchange tributes to one another's nobility. Silcote of Silcotes (Chap. xxxii) supplies an example. Arthur Silcote is speaking to young James, and the "gentleman" in Arthur "bursts out in him instantly" at a manly answer from James: "You are a noble fellow, sir. If you turn chimney sweep or scavenger you will be a gentleman still. I ask your pardon for having misconceived you." But Henry Kingsley never reaches the absurdity of his brother Charles in such scenes as that in

Two Years Ago, between Valentia St. Just and Frank Headley, in which the latter's words force from Valentia the exclamation, "Noble Creature! . . .You will make me love you whether I wish or not" (Chap. xx). Except for the children (frequent characters in Henry Kingsley's novels), who often talk stiltedly like adults (did children talk like this at the time?) Henry's dialogue is consistently more natural than that of Charles. Elwin, who is annoyed by the excessive nobility of sentiment in Henry Kingsley, does not do justice to the other side of the case.

94. Chap. xvii.

95. Chap. xxxii.

96. See, for example, Austin Elliot, Chap. xvii, the secrets of the family.

97. Silcote of Silcotes, Chap. xxxii.

98. The same, Chap. lx.

99. Chap. x; see also Chap. v.

100. Cp. with Whyte-Melville's comments in The Brookes of Bridlemere (above, Chap. xvii, Note 100), the narrator's remark in Ravenshoe: "I am a very great admirer of the old feudal feeling, when it is not abused by either party" (Chap. xlii).

101. The Harveys, Chap. ix. Small details in the novels suggest the same range of doubt. It is in The Harveys that Henry Kingsley's uses Whyte-Melville's favorite Latin tag, cui bono, but with reference to classical learning and the British public school education, an institution which Whyte-Melville never questions.

102. Ravenshoe, Chap. lii.

103. Chap. xxxii, quoted above, Chap. x,

104. Chap. li, for example. Charles' thoughts during the bombardment and the psychological irrelevancies of the scene, as when Charles has to sit looking at the man in front of him: "At this time he came to the conclusion that the patch of grease on his shoulder was of the same shape as the map of Sweden"--this while the "air was

tortured with concussion." The scene is carried out in some detail. See also Chap. liv, the paragraph on the guns at Balaclava.

105. The indebtedness of Ravenshoe to Thackeray is evident. Lord Harry Welter and Adelaide reproduce the situation of Rawdon Crawley and Becky Sharp, though Adelaide is more of a Beatrix than a Becky. Without distortion of character, however, Harry and Adelaide work out a kind of salvation for themselves. From Henry Esmond, perhaps, comes the suggestion for the presence of Catholic priests in the Ravenshoe household and the Catholic and Protestant brothers.

106. Ravenshoe, again, supplies instances of both.

107. An illustration of this is his dramatic use of the duel (in Austin Elliot and The Harveys, for instance). Whyte-Melville veers away from dealing with such scenes. The talent for scenes shows itself in quieter ways, as in the scene in the Park (Ravenshoe, Chap. xlvi) when the Queen passes in her carriage, Adelaide's horse is startled and carries her nearer, and the Queen snubs Adelaide whose sudden movement appears to be one of the forward and brazen acts for which she has a reputation. This scene in Ravenshoe shows also Henry Kingsley's talent for the scene in which a number of people with conflicting characters and purposes meet, partly by chance. Cp. with this the scene in the Ride in Whyte-Melville's The Brookes of Bridlemere, Chap. xxviii.

# CHAPTER XVIII

## Conclusion.

From a critical point of view the main conclusions about Whyte-Melville, it must be frankly admitted, are apparent to any reader who browses through half a dozen of the novels. That these conclusions were not satisfactorily drawn until 1922 (by Michael Sadleir) and 1937 (by Malcolm Elwin) was due less to the fact that a critical problem existed than to the fact that up to that time the writers who were moved to comment on Whyte-Melville--or even, probably, to read him--were writers who saw him through eyes turned nostalgically to a vanished social milieu. As literary historians turn more and more to an exhaustive account of the currents of minor Victorian literature, now that the period is far enough in the past for it to be no longer the fashion to spend energies damning Victorianism, it is probable that these novels will take a modest place among those which are representative of phases of mid-Nineteenth Century society. This will divide his novels into two groups, one very small, the other larger. The first group consists of those few novels which may be read with pleasure yet, notably Market Harborough and its companion piece Inside the Bar, novels which do not clearly reveal the general

tendencies of Whyte-Melville's writing. The second group, among which it will be difficult to select on grounds of quality, consists of the many society novels in a mildly Thackerayan mode which give more evidence of the nature of Whyte-Melville's appeal to his contemporaries. The present writer suggests attention particularly to Tilbury Nogo, Kate Coventry, Holmby House, The Gladiators, The Brookes of Bridlemere, The White Rose, Satanella, Katerfelto, Riding Recollections, and Black but Comely as a somewhat arbitrary compromise between quality and representativeness for the student of Victorian fiction. If the reader for pleasure wants to go beyond Market Harborough, Kate Coventry and Satanella will do perhaps, with one of the Cavalier romances to complete the reading.

If this dissertation does not increase perceptibly the accuracy of critical appraisal, it adds considerably to the historical documentation. The account of literary relationships both with the older and the contemporary traditions, an account will begun by Saintsbury, Sadleir and Elwin, is expanded, and the great indebtedness to Thackeray is clarified. The shifts in subject, emphasis and tone as the novels develop chronologically are traced for the first time, and an interpretation offered of the relationship between the historical novels and the society novels, an interpretation which makes of the former a kind of gloss upon the latter,

the two groups showing the uneasy response of the writer to social changes during his lifetime. With this is provided a sufficiently detailed descriptive account of the novels, it is hoped, to save the specialist in Victorian fiction a good many hours of proportionately unrewarding effort.

THE END

## APPENDIX A. Whyte-Melville's Verse.

About the verse of George John Whyte-Melville, there is little to say. During his own life time it rivaled in popularity the masculine jingles of Charles Kingsley, R. E. Egerton-Warburton, Bromley Davenport, Adam Lindsay Gordon, and others (the anthologies by De Broke, Cuming, Parker, and Looker listed in Note 21 to Chapter ii provide enough examples). Saintsbury is the only critic of importance who has noticed the verse, and his comment that Whyte-Melville wrote "capital" sporting verse[1] is restrained enough. Lord Willoughby de Broke when he says that "Drink, Puppy, Drink" is perhaps the best known of his hunting songs is forced to add that it "leaves something to be desired."[2] One of Whyte-Melville's poems has survived, his "Good-Bye," set to music by F. P. Tosti, sung frequently by Melba (and recently on the screen by Deanna Durbin). The writer of this dissertation remembers it being sung in his home when he was young and has found it in a family album of music[3] packed in a piano bench now little used.

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[1] In his History of Nineteenth Century Literature.

[2] In The Sport of our Ancestors, p. 62.

[3] American Home Music Album, sel. and ed. by Albert E. Weir, New York and London, 1915, pp. 752-757.

In addition to the "Hunting Songs" and the "Soldier's Songs" there is a group of "Miscellaneous Songs" and "Miscellaneous Verse" in the collected edition (London, 1899) most of it in a faded melancholy and romantic style which shows clearly the influence of Tennyson. Wilted rather than fragile, these pieces are interesting evidence supplementing the testimony of the historical novels--in which several of them first appeared--to a sentimental vein in Whyte-Melville which stands in antithesis to the restricted and circumscribed melancholy of the society novels.

# Bibliography

## Section (1). The Works of George John Whyte-Melville.

Note. This bibliography follows *Excursions in Victorian Bibliography* by Michael Sadleir (London, 1922), pp. 183-188, "G. J. Whyte-Melville," where additional information is given. References in the text of the dissertation are to the collected edition, *The Works of G. J. Whyte-Melville*, edited by Sir Herbert Maxwell (London: Thacker & Co.; Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1898-1902) in twenty-four volumes.

1850. Horace: Odes, Epodes and Carmen Saeculare. Translated into English Verse. London. (Not in the collected edition.)

1853. Digby Grand: An Autobiography. London. Two volumes. (Volume XIV, 1900, of the collected edition.)

1854. Tilbury Nogo: Or Passages in the Life of an Unsuccessful Man. London. Two volumes. (Volume VII of the collected edition, together with *Scotland and the Moors*, paged continuously.)

1855. General Bounce: Or The Lady and the Locusts. London. Two volumes. (Volume XXI of the collected edition.)

1856. Kate Coventry: An Autobiography. Edited by G. J. Whyte-Melville. London. (Volume XVII of the collected edition.)

1857. The Arab's Ride to Cairo: A Legend of the Desert. Edinburgh and London. (Not in the collected edition. Verse.)

1858. The Interpreter: A Tale of the War. London. (Volume XXIV of the collected edition.)

1860. Holmby House: A Tale of the Northants. London. Two volumes. (Volume XX of the collected edition.)

1861. Market Harborough: Or How Mr. Sawyer Went to the Shires. London. (Volume IV of the collected edition, together with *Inside the Bar: Or Sketches at Soakington* which was first published with the fourth edition of *Market Harborough*, London, 1862.)

1861. Good for Nothing: Or All Down Hill. London. Two volumes. (Volume XXIII of the collected edition.)

1863. The Gladiators: A Tale of Rome and Judaea. London. Three volumes. (Volume XXII of the collected edition.)

1864. The Brookes of Bridlemere. London. Three volumes. (Volume X of the collected edition.)

1866. Cerise: A Tale of the Last Century. London. Three volumes. (Volume XVIII of the collected edition.)

1868. The White Rose. London. Three volumes. (Volume XI of the collected edition.)

1869. Bones and I: Or The Skeleton at Home. London. (Volume VIII of the collected edition, together with Songs and Verses. Essays.)

1869. Songs and Verses. London. (Volume VIII in the collected edition which includes additions. Verse.)

1869. M. Or N. "Similia Similibus Curantur." London. Two volumes. (Volume VI of the collected edition.)

1870. Contraband: Or A Losing Hazard. London. Two volumes. (Volume V of the collected edition.)

1871. Sarchedon: A Legend of the Great Queen. London. Three volumes. (Volume XV of the collected edition.)

1872. Satanella: A Story of Punchestown. London. Two volumes. (Volume XIII of the collected edition.)

1873. The True Cross: A Legend of the Church. London. (Not in the collected edition. Verse.)

1874. Uncle John: A Novel. London. Three volumes. (Volume III of the collected edition)

1875. Katerfelto: A Story of Exmoor. London. (Volume II of the collected edition.)

1876. Sister Louise: Or The Story of a Woman's Repentance. London. (Volume XVI of the collected edition, together with Rosine.)

1877. Rosine. London. (Volume XVI of the collected edition.)

1878. Riding Recollections. London. (Volume I of the collected edition.)

1878. Roy's Wife: A Novel. London. Two volumes. (Volume XII of the collected edition.)

1879. Black But Comely: Or The Adventures of Jane Lee. London. Three volumes. (Volume IX of the collected edition.)

? [Probably 1879 or 1880.] The Bones of Rothwell: A Lecture . . . , being an account of the remarkable bone cavern beneath Rothwell Church. Rothwell. (Not in the collected edition.)

## Bibliography

### Section (2). Writings about George John Whyte-Melville.

Note. Several books with only a few scattered allusions to Whyte-Melville are more valuable for the light they throw upon the place of his novels in the literature of the period than are some of the following accounts. These have been placed in Section (3). The decision concerning several items is arbitrary.

ANSTRUTHER-THOMSON, JOHN. *Eighty Years' Reminiscences.* London, etc., 1904. 2 vols.

Contains letters from Whyte-Melville and includes anecdotal material.

BAKER, E. A. *The History of the English Novel:* [Vol. VII] *The Age of Dickens and Thackeray.* London, 1936.

A useful account, sound in its general emphasis, needing correction in details.

BALFOUR-MELVILLE, EVAN. Letter in London *Times Literary Supplement*, 23 June 1921, p. 404c.

Corrects the birth date given in the *Times* article the preceding week.

BATESON, F. N. W., ed. *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature.* New York and Cambridge, England, 1941. 4 vols.

BENJAMIN, LEWIS S. *Victorian Novelists*, by Lewis Melville [pseud.]. London, 1906.

Includes a chapter on Whyte-Melville, pp. 188-203.

________________. "The Centenary of G. J. Whyte-Melville." In *Fortnightly Review*, CXV Old Series (1921), 997-1003.

DARWIN, BERNARD. Introduction to *Market Harborough.* London and Toronto, 1933. Tavistock Library of Famous Sporting Books.

This introduction was not available for use in the dissertation.

DE BROKE, LORD WILLOUGHBY. See VERNEY, RICHARD GREVILLE.

ELLIS, STEWART M. *Mainly Victorian.* London, 1925.

Chapter on Whyte-Melville, pp. 103-107, reprinted from *The Bookman*, LX (June, 1921), 124-126.

ELMHIRST, E. PENNELL. *The Cream of Leicestershire.* London, 1883.

In addition to scattered allusions, includes a death notice.

ELWIN, MALCOLM. Review of the Tavistock Library edition of *Market Harborough*, *Riding Recollections*, *Kate Coventry*, and *Katerfelto*, in the London *Observer*, 23 July 1933.

This article was not available for use in the dissertation, but the substance of it, presumably, is contained the the same writer's *Victorian Wallflowers*.

______________. *Victorian Wallflowers*. London, 1937.

In addition to valuable comment on Whyte-Melville, pp. 285-288 and scattered allusions, the book contains the most useful treatment of related minor novelists.

*Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 11th edition. Cambridge, England, and New York, 1910-1911. 29 vols.

Contains a brief entry under "Whyte-Melville, George John." In the next complete edition, 1929, the entry is deleted.

FORTESCUE, Sir J. GEORGE. "Whyte-Melville." In Royal Society of Literature, *The Eighteen Sixties*, ed. by John Drinkwater. Cambridge, England, 1932. Pp. 224-244.

*The Field*, LII (7 December 1878), 724.

A death notice.

GALSWORTHY, JOHN. "*On Forsyte 'Change*." New York, 1930.

The story "A Sad Affair." There are scattered allusions to Whyte-Melville in other novels by Galsworthy.

JEAFFRESON, J. CORDY. *Novels and Novelists from Elizabeth to Victoria*. Vol. II, London, 1858.

Includes a brief account of Whyte-Melville after he had written five novels.

LOCKER-LAMPSON, FREDERICK. *My Confidences*. London, 1896.

Includes "Major G. J. Whyte-Melville and Others," a sketch. Locker-Lampson, apparently, was Whyte-Melville's chief literary acquaintance.

*London Illustrated News*, 28 December, 1878.

A death notice, clipping in the Boston Public Library copy of *Riding Recollections*.

MAXWELL, SIR HERBERT. Introduction to *Katerfelto*. London, 1898. Pp. ix-xviii.

_________________. Introduction to *Riding Recollections*. London, 1898. Pp. ii-xviii.

__________________. "Whyte-Melville, George John." In *Dictionary of National Biography*. Ed. by Sidney Lee. LXI (1900), 173-174.

MELVILLE, LEWIS [pseud.]. See BENJAMIN, LEWIS S.

NETHERCOTE, H. O. *The Pytchley Hunt*. Ed. by Charles Edmonds. 2nd ed. London, 1888.

Includes a sketch of Whyte-Melville, pp. 263-272, containing the greatest amount of personal detail of any one of the sketches.

PRYCE-JONES, ALLAN. "Books in General." In *New Statesman and Nation*, XXXI (11 May 1946), 341.

The column discusses *Market Harborough* and the society which Whyte-Melville's novels deal with.

SADLEIR, MICHAEL. *Excursions in Victorian Bibliography*. London, 1922.

Essay and bibliography of Whyte-Melville, pp. 183-188. Though relatively brief, the essay is the most penetrating of all the essays on Whyte-Melville.

[London] *Times*. Death and funeral notices: 8 December 1878, p. 5, col. f; 10 December 1878, p. 7, col. c; 24 December 1878, p. 7, col. f.

[London] *Times Literary Supplement*. "Whyte-Melville and Others," 16 June 1921, pp. 377-378.

UNDERHILL, G. F. *A Century of Fox-Hunting*. London, 1900.

Sketch of Whyte-Melville, pp. 179-184. By selection, arrangement, and phrasing apparently based on Nethercote, inaccurately.

VERNEY, RICHARD GREVILLE, LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE, ed. *The Sport of Our Ancestors*, Being a Collection of Prose and Verse Setting Forth the Sport of Fox-Hunting as They Knew It. With introduction and appreciations. London, 1921.

Includes an illuminating general introduction and, as well, an appreciation of Whyte-Melville and selection from *Market Harborough*.

WAGENKNECHT, EDWARD. *Cavalcade of the English Novel, from Elizabeth to George VI*. New York, 1943.

Includes a paragraph summary about Whyte-Melville.

## Bibliography

Section (3). Supplementary Works of Chief Importance.

Note. As already stated in the note to Section (2), several of the following works contain passing references to Whyte-Melville. Some of them are of greater value as background for the understanding of his novels than the essays listed in Section (2).

APSLEY, VIOLA, LADY. *Bridleways Through History.* London, 1936.

Two chapters on hunting and horsemanship during the nineteenth century are especially valuable as background.

BAKER, E. A., and JAMES PACKMAN. *A Guide to the Best Fiction, English and American, Including Translations from Foreign Languages.* New and enl. ed. New York, 1932.

BUCHAN, JOHN. *Sir Walter Scott.* New York, 1932.

CARLISLE, R. H. *Fox-Hunting Past and Present.* New York, 1908.

Contains scattered allusions to Whyte-Melville, but not of value in adding to materials available in other sources.

CHALMERS, PATRICK. *The History of Hunting.* London, n.d. The Lonsdale Library of Sports and Games, Vol. XXIII.

With Lady Apsley's book the most valuable of the sketches of hunting and the country squire as well as of the more fashionable hunting set. Contains scattered allusions to Whyte-Melville.

CHANDLER, FRANK W. *The Literature of Roguery.* New York, 1907. 2 vols.

Besides a brief discussion of *Katerfelto* contains useful discussions of such novelists as Lever and Thackeray.,

CUMING, E. D., ed. *A Fox-Hunting Anthology: Selections from the Writers of the 18th, 19th, and 20th Centuries.* London, 1928.

DARTON, F. J. H. *From Surtees to Sassoon: Some English Contrasts (1838-1928).* London, 1931.

Scattered allusions to Whyte-Melville, but these are set in a context particularly valuable for an understanding of Whyte-Melville.

ELTON, OLIVER. *A Survey of English Literature, 1780-1880.* New York, 4 vols.

FARIES, RANDOLPH, 2ND. *Ancient Rome in the English Novel; A Study in English Historical Fiction.* Philadelphia, 1923.

Includes a laudatory discussion of *The Gladiators.*

FLOWER, DESMOND, comp. *A Century of Best Sellers 1830-1930.* London, 1934.

Includes *The Queen's Maries* in its list.

FREDERICK, Sir CHARLES, ed. *Fox-Hunting.* London, 1930. The Lonsdale Library of Sports and Games, Vol. VII.

Useful especially for "A Pytchley Gallop" by Sir Charles Frederick (Chap. xv, pp. 166-171); "A Week in Leicestershire" by Major A. E. Burnaby (Chap. xxii, pp. 220-230), and "A Fox-Hunter's Bookshelf" by Frederick (Chap. xxxii, pp. 310-318). The last includes a section on Whyte-Melville.

HARROLD, CHARLES FREDERICK. *John Henry Newman; An Expository and Critical Study of His Mind, Thought and Art.* London, etc., 1945.

Includes a helpful discussion, in connection with Newman's definition, of the traditional conception of the "gentleman" and of the attitudes during the Victorian Period.

LOOKER, SAMUEL J., ed. *The Chase; an Anthology of Hunting.* London, 1922.

LOVETT, R. M., and H. S. HUGHES. *The History of the Novel in England.* Boston, 1932.

MARRIOTT, Sir JOHN. *English History in English Fiction.* London and Glasgow, 1940.

Includes a favorable critical estimate of *Holmby House.*

MARROT, H. V. *The Life and Letters of John Galsworthy.* New York, 1936.

PAGET, GUY. *The Melton Mowbray of John Ferneley* (1782-1860). Leicester, England, 1931.

PARKER, ERIC, ed. *The Lonsdale Library of Sporting Prose and Verse.* Philadelphia, n.d. The Lonsdale Library of Sports and Games, Vol. XII.

RIBBLESDALE, THOMAS LISTER, 4th Baron. *The Queen's Hounds and Stag-Hunting Recollections.* London, 1897.

Contains scattered references to Whyte-Melville.

ROSA, M. W. The Silver Fork School; Novels of Fashion Preceding Vanity Fair. New York, 1936. Columbia University Studies in English and Comparative Literature, No. 123.

The novels of Whyte-Melville and of others related to him are a continuation of this novel of fashion.

SADLEIR, MICHAEL. Anthony Trollope; A Commentary. Boston and New York, 1927.

The introductory materials on the Victorian Age provide a particularly good background for the study of Whyte-Melville.

SAINTSBURY, GEORGE. The English Novel. London, n.d. Channels of Literature Series.

________________. A History of Nineteenth Century Literature (1780-1895). New York and London, 1899.

In these two books Saintsbury in a paragraph apiece says as much to the point as any other writer about Whyte-Melville except Sadleir.

SAMPSON, GEORGE. The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature. Cambridge and New York, 1941.

SASSOON, SIEGFRIED. Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man -1929- . In The Memoirs of George Sherston. Garden City, N.Y., 1937.

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SIMPSON, CHARLES. Leicestershire and Its Hunts: The Quorn, the Cottesmore, and the Belvoir. New York, 1926.

STEEL, ANTHONY. Jorrock's England. New York, n.d. Preface dated 1932.

VERNEY, RICHARD GREVILLE, Lord WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE. The Passing Years. London, 1924.

WALPOLE, HUGH. "Novelists of the Seventies." In The Eighteen-Seventies; Essays by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature. Ed. by Harley Granville-Barker. New York and Cambridge, England, 1929.

Useful background, including brief comment on Whyte-Melville, p. 32.

WARD, A. W. and A. R. WALLER, eds. The Cambridge History of English Literature. Popular edition. New York and Cambridge, England, 1933.

WATSON, FREDERICK. Robert Smith Surtees; A Critical Study. London, 1933.

In addition to a detailed study of Surtees, Watson surveys hunting literature and novelists, including scattered remarks about Whyte-Melville. Extremely valuable.

## Bibliography. Section (4)

### Index of Allusions to the Chief Authors (Mainly Victorian Novelists) Whose Writings Are Described or Quoted from in the Text.

Ainsworth, William Harrison, 53, 449.

Apperly, Charles James ("Nimrod"), 19, 35, 52-53, 459, 494.

Blackmore, Richard Doddridge, 185.

Borrow, George, 449.

Braddon, Mary Elizabeth (Mrs. Maxwell), 35, 44, 56, 181, 232, 280, 305-306, 315, 339, 340, 378, 463, 484, 495.

Brindley, Charles ("Harry Hieover"), 134.

Bulwer-Lytton, Edward, 34, 49, 50-51, 53, 55, 130, 207, 260-261, 377, 458.

Byron, George Gordon Noel, 33, 59-60, 135, 227-228, 229, 238, 302, 456, 459, 468, 483-487, 494.

Dickens, Charles, 236, 459, 461, 462, 494.

Disraeli, Benjamin, 34, 49, 207, 260-261.

Dixon, Henry Hall ("The Druid"), 35, 53.

Dumas, Alexandre, 55.

Egan Pierce, 38, 53, 59.

Galsworthy, John, 3, 46, 218-224, 235-239, 285, 353, 484.

Gordon, Adam Lindsey, 31, 227-229, 494, 506.

Grant, James, 33, 35, 50, 69, 132, 133, 200, 201, 224, 233, 377, 378, 444, 456, 466, 484.

Hook, Theodore, 38, 50, 51, 59, 68, 459, 460, 463, 494.

Kingsley, Charles, 30, 47, 48, 53-54, 185, 187, 199, 230-231, 233, 240, 280, 354, 374, 376, 377, 379, 384, 453-454, 466, 482, 494, 500, 506.

Kingsley, Henry, 35, 130, 133, 134, 185, 187, 199, 228, 229, 231-232, 233, 241, 261, 262, 280-281, 284-285, 286, 314, 316, 338, 341, 343, 353, 379, 383, 384, 426, 453-454, 455, 456, 457, 466, 482, 487-493, 499.

Lawrence, George Alfred, 33, 34, 35, 51, 57, 131, 135, 200, 201, 202, 224-227, 231, 232, 234, 286, 313, 376, 379, 383, 384, 455, 437, 466, 467, 484, 487.

Lever, Charles James, 33, 35, 50, 59, 60, 68, 130, 378, 383, 459, 461, 462, 466, 494.

Locker-Lampson, Frederick, 20.

Marryat, Frederick, 33, 38, 50, 459, 466.

Masefield, John, 381.

Mathews, Charles, 239-240, 459, 462, 494.

Mills, John, 34, 52, 130, 261, 353, 426, 466.

Moore, Thomas, 309, 459, 468, 494.

Oliphant, Lawrence, 43, 49.

Ouida (Louise de la Ramee), 33, 34, 35, 45, 46, 51, 56, 181, 224-227, 239, 280, 379, 383, 426, 458, 466, 467, 487.

Pennell-Elmhirst, Edward, 35, 356-357, 379, 382.

Phillips, George S., 449.

Sassoon, Siegfried, 3, 47, 51, 374, 454, 490.

Scott, Sir Walter, 55, 132, 184, 190, 229, 459, 461, 462, 495.

Shorthouse, John, 482.

Smart, Henry Hawley, 35, 43, 44, 45, 52, 133, 187, 233, 239, 285, 286, 339, 353, 375, 466, 487.

Smedley, Francis Edward, 50, 52, 55, 133, 224, 225, 227, 229, 314, 339, 340, 341, 353, 378, 379, 426, 456-457, 484, 495.

Strickland, Agnes, 134.

Surtees, Robert Smith, 19, 30, 32, 34, 36, 48, 51, 233, 238, 240, 260-261, 314, 359, 364, 365, 374, 380, 382, 384, 454, 459, 466, 494, 496.

Tennyson, Alfred, Lord, 198-199, 495, 507.

Thackeray, William Makepeace, 34, 35, 50, 57, 59-60, 130, 135, 174, 179, 186, 189, 233, 236, 238, 309, 338, 340, 384, 454, 461, 462, 467-483, 484, 496, 498-499, 504

Trollope, Anthony, 201, 234, 365, 377, 378, 379, 403, 425, 456.

## Bibliography.

### Section (5). Miscellaneous Additional Titles Cited in the Dissertation.

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Who Was Who . . . 1897-1916. Londoh and New York, 1919.

WEIR, ALBERT E., ed. American Home Music Album. New York and London, 1915.

WILSON, EDMUND. "An Old Friend of the Family: Thackeray." In The New Yorker, February 8, 1947, pp. 80-89.

## Abstract of Dissertation

The Novels of George John Whyte-Melville supplies for the first time a detailed account of a minor British novelist of the Victorian era who was popular in his own day and was representative of one aspect of Victorian literature and Victorian society. Previous treatments consist of a few passages in literary histories and a few essays. The chief of these are the discussions by Sir Herbert Maxwell (1898 and 1900), "Lewis Melville" [Lewis S. Benjamin] (1906 and 1921), S. M. Ellis (1921), the Times Literary Supplement (1921), Lord Willoughby de Broke (1921), Michael Sadleir (1922), Sir John Fortescue (1932), E. A. Baker (1936), and Malcolm Elwin (1937), to which should be added treatments of hunting literature by F. J. H. Darton (1921) and Frederick Watson (1933). Several of these essays are uncritical appreciations by writers sharing the views of an older generation. The most valuable are those by Sadleir and Elwin.

Whyte-Melville's novels coincide in time with the decline of the landed gentry and the rise of the middle class in Victorian England. Conservative and nostalgic in tone, they deal less with actual problems of rural and agricultural life and of the squires and landed gentry than with the life of the sportsman-gentleman whom this society supported in careless leisure and in whom a special set of values, originally Christian and chivalric, still persisted though thinned and faded. Particularly in his novels of contemporary life Whyte-Melville concerns himself almost solely with a static group of such people, men and women alternating between country house and town house, sporting season and London season, oblivious to the quakings of the ground beneath their feet. His ability to cast a faint glow of romance over this cycle attracted not only the

fashionable West End sportsman but as well the members of the middle class who aped their betters and welcomed a romanticized picture of the existence which they envied and imitated.

Three streams of literary influence in particular are apparent in the early novels: the picaresque novel of military adventure (Marryat, Lever, Grant), the novel of fashionable life (the "Silver Fork" school, Hook, Thackeray), and the growing body of hunting literature (especially the fashionable journalists like Apperly, more than Surtees, and such novelists as John Mills). The first strain is of influence chiefly on the early novels; the other two strains continue to be influential.

Despite the overlapping and repetition of types of character, of plot and situation, and of theme which make one Whyte-Melville novel much like another, several patterns of variation and development can be traced. One main pattern corresponds to the three chief types of influence just mentioned. Another divides the writings into two chronological groups, the years 1868-1869 marking a clear shift in tone and emphasis. This shift reflects tendencies in the novel represented by such Victorian writers as George Lawrence, Mrs. Braddon, "Ouida," and Henry Hawley Smart, and is coincident with the revival of fashionable life at this time after the early Victorian reaction from Regency license. Another pattern divides the novels into two groups, one consisting of those novels which are restricted in scope and concentrated in structure, the other of those which attempt a broader picture of the society of which he writes and a more ambitious plot. Although this second group is much the larger and also more representative, those novels which deserve critical attention fall without exception into the first group. Still another pattern divides the historical novels from the society novels. The historical novels, with the exception

of two which deal with the ancient world, concern themselves with the Cavalier tradition, Stuart and Bourbon, and are a gloss upon the society novels, supplying missing pieces to the pattern of Whyte-Melville's attitudes. They incorporate clearly that nostalgia for the chivalric tradition which is the reverse side of a melancholy disillusionment (especially in the treatment of marriage) which dominates many passages in the novels of contemporary life. They show the writer's increasing conservatism in the face of the middle class encroachments upon society. This attitude is somewhat in contrast to the tendency of the social novels to accept the situation although a kind of inverted romanticism can be seen not only in his disillusionment but in his inclination to champion the young adventuress while rejecting her male counterpart.

After the initial influence of the Lever-Marryat school, the dominant influence is that of Thackeray. In style, manner, tone, and subject matter, Whyte-Melville is clearly indebted to his master, a fact noticed by his own contemporaries early in his career. In this he abandons a successful vein which shows in _Market_ _Harborough_ to imitate Thackeray's weaknesses without an ability to match Thackeray's distinction. The indebtedness is such that _Pendennis_ (together with _The_ _Newcomes_) contains very nearly the whole Whyte-Melvillean duty of man. The influence of _Pendennis_ is noticeable in the novels of the early sixties; his version of _Vanity_ _Fair_ is postponed to the very end of his career. In addition to the influence of Thackeray (or rather linked with the influence of Thackeray), Whyte-Melville's novels testify to the permeating influence of Byron upon the sportsman-military caste (as do the novels of other related writers), and to the appeal of that pesudo-masculinity and surface-level emotion which characterize Byron's oriental tales.

Although not an influence on Whyte-Melville, the novels of Henry Kingsley provide the most illuminating comparison, embodying with considerable literary success the same set of attitudes which appears in Whyte-Melville's writings.

Although descriptively the customary generalizations about Whyte-Melville's novels are often either incomplete (understandably) or inaccurate, critically there is no mistake in the judgment which time has passed on the writings. From the verse, which consists of jingles upon hunting themes or wilted Tennysonian lyrics, nothing at all can be salvaged. Most of the novels are dull, repetitious, ill-contrived, trite, and superficial. These may rest forgotten even by the leisured reader browsing among the minor Victorians. But for such a reader there are a few volumes worth attention, notably the titles usually mentioned: Kate Coventry and Market Harborough, probably in addition Satanella, possibly Katerfelto as well. Market Harborough, the best, most popular, and least characteristic of Whyte-Melville's novels, contains vigorous writing and shows a talent for characterization and humor. Its companion piece, Inside the Bar, is not mentioned by title in any of the essays on Whyte-Melville, possibly because it is usually reprinted with Market Harborough and may be thought of a part of it. In deftness and sureness of touch it equals the better known title. Occasionally in later novels Whyte-Melville invigorates the chapters with passages which recall the more successful novels. But when he abandoned the vein of Market Harborough he gave evidence of faulty critical judgment and of romantic inclinations (which show both in his enthusiasms and disillusionments) to which his imagination and intellect were not equal.

Patterns already mentioned and others not mentioned are traced in the dissertation of which this abstract is a summary, and detailed accounts

of the individual novels and their interrelationships are provided. Even in summary, however, one word may be added concerning Whyte-Melville the man. Biographical material is slight and accumulates barely to a sketch. He lived his life as a sportsman among sportsmen, eschewing literary acquaintances almost entirely despite his success as a popular novelist. The testimony of his personal acquaintances is to a quick though sometimes tart wit, a sportsmanlike conduct and quiet skill among his fellow horsemen, an underlying vein of personal melancholy, and an unfailing tact and considerateness in all personal relationships. Two volumes of essays support this characterization. One, which expresses his melancholy, is a dull and moralizing sequence. But the other, Riding Recollections, the next to last book which he wrote, is focused outward upon the life he loved. In structure a manual of horsemanship, it reveals in quiet and unassuming prose, the man as his friends apparently knew him.

## Biography

The writer was born in Boston, Massachusetts, September 17, 1912, the fourth (and now only surviving) child of George F. Freeman (now Captain, Medical Corps, U.S. Navy, Retired) and Henrietta Carrington Freeman (now dead). He prepared for college at Chelsea (Mass.) and Portsmouth (N.H.) High Schools, the schools neighboring Navy stations at which his father was on duty, and also at The Lawrence Academy, Groton, Mass., from which he graduated 1930. He received the degree of A.B. from Bowdoin College, 1934, *cum laude*, with honors in English, and Phi Beta Kappa, and the degree of A.M. from Harvard University, 1935. After a year with the Quincy (Mass.) Evening News, he began the teaching of English at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, Penna. In the summer of 1937 he married Mary Elizabeth Hand.

He attended Boston University during the summer sessions of 1939 and 1940 and during the academic year 1940-1941, when he was graduate assistant. He returned to Susquehanna University for the first term of the following year and then went to Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, to teach during the second term. From May, 1942, to September, 1945, he served as a comissioned officer in the U.S. Naval Reserve, as training officer in communications in Washington, D.C., and as Officer-in-Charge of a Communications Unit attached to the Commander, North Pacific Force.

During the academic year 1945-1946 he taught composition at Harvard University as a teaching fellow. The next year he accepted an appointment as instructor in English at Boston University and was promoted to an assistant professorship in July, 1947.

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